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Nicholas J. Healy, Jr.



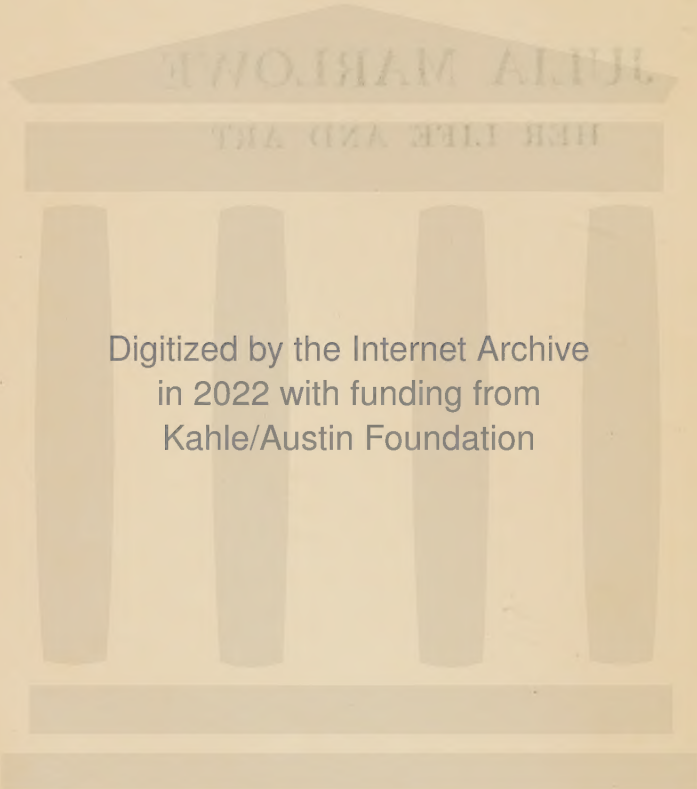






# **JULIA MARLOWE**

**HER LIFE AND ART**



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JULIA MARLOWE  
*The Painting by Irving R. Wiles*

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# JULIA MARLOWE

## HER LIFE AND ART

BY

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK :: 1926 :: LONDON

JULIA MARLOWE

HER LIFE AND ART

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CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON the authority of calculations projected in 1924, Julia Marlowe had then acted in the Shakespearean drama a greater number of times than any other actress of her own period or of any other, and had drawn to that drama a larger total audience than any other player had ever addressed in it.

Novitiate and all, her career in her art had spanned forty years. From her own inclining and by the main strength of her own resolute will, she had played Shakespeare in the face of the adverse wisdom, grave remonstrance and often the open hostility of theatrical managements, honestly sure of the lore of their craft that Shakespeare spelled ruin. Yet the records of the same years have set also this tradition at naught. After many seasons of her faith-inspired effort, the public was won to approve her judgment, not only with unprecedented attendance but with merchantable tokens of regard; for in the bald terms of the balance sheet, the total money receipts from her Shakespearean performances were the greatest in the history of the stage.

Therefore, she did what the world had long agreed to be impossible. She made of Shakespeare at once an artistic and a business success.

We are to have in this book the story of a career

that began with every untoward condition, and, by courage, labor, mind and merit, went through many ill chances to a long succession of triumphs and so to the highest honors in the actor's calling. But no such account of struggle and victory, however adventurous, could tell anything of a greater permanent interest than the ways by which this gifted woman reversed accepted doctrine and proved that Shakespeare is not for the closet but for the stage, and not for dead and vanished centuries but for all time.

It is an odd fact, never much exploited, that the history of the English-speaking theater for more than two hundred years shows actors and actresses famous for Shakespearean interpretations that in reality played Shakespeare but little. Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, the Keans and others were great and wonderful *Hamlets*, *Othellos* and *Macbeths*; but the actual ratio of their performances in these parts to their performances in plays other than Shakespeare's was small. As to all of them of all times, since the Restoration, at least, the truth seems to be that they played Shakespeare for their reputations and other plays for their daily bread and meat. This was true of Irving, whose elaborate productions of Shakespeare left him so sadly penniless at the close of a noted career; it was true in a less degree even of Edwin Booth, who at the top of his splendor would sometimes play that marvelous *Hamlet* of his to empty seats. Neither prejudice nor ignorance but only long and bitter experience gave birth to the

dismal adage about Shakespeare and ruin so familiar upon the managerial lips. All history until our own time spoke with so confirmed a voice upon that side, there might be a profit in asking why this exception.

The record of Miss Marlowe's stage work is reflected in the criticisms written of it in the press as she passed from rôle to rôle. Any one that now reviews these commentaries will notice that in what was said of her, year after year, there recurs one persistent note. It is the acknowledgment by the critics, sometimes made frankly, sometimes made shyly, of a quality in her work not easily analyzed. Some think her youth and beauty give her the power she wields; then, on the next page, one reads that she is not beautiful at all. Many say the baffling magic is all in her voice—so tunable, so rich, with such a compass, so persuasive! Some speak eloquently of her naïve and perfectly natural grace as the secret of her charm. None of these explications sounds convincing. In the days of Julia Marlowe's arrival, the American stage abounded in actresses that were young, beautiful, charming, sometimes naïve and occasionally sweet of voice. They passed across the horizon of men's regard like shadows on a mirror and left as little trace. At rare intervals, a critic or writer seems to perceive in the Julia Marlowe of the stage a force beyond and above all this, a something inevitable, potent, reasoned and sure, some quality that shows in everything she does; and in this, he thinks, is to be found her compelling touch upon the sympathies of her audiences. Sometimes



he is aware that this is a force having to do with her utterance or her readings. Yet, on the whole, the most significant fact one gathers from turning over these old reviews is the paucity of comment about the phase of the actor's skill that must always be above all others and wherein lay and lies the first secret of Julia Marlowe's art and unequaled success.

To unfold this mystery and shed a casual light upon the difficulties this woman fought down all her career, I will relate an incident. Once, and once only, after she had become famous, she was to make a Shakespearean production under a management not of her choosing nor under her command. As usual, she prepared an acting version of the play, in which she had marked the pivotal and meaningful words not only in her own part but in the parts of all the other players. This she brought to the manager and asked that copies be made for the use of the company.

Negligently the manager fingered the pages. Then, with a smile of indulgent superiority, he said:

"Oh, we don't have to bother with all that, Miss Marlowe! Just have the parts copied as they are in the book. Then we can have some original readings."

He was voicing what would have been the attitude of most managers, of most actors and of most writers for the press that dealt with acting. It is beyond explanation, the rut we have fallen into about these matters. Upon and around the American as

the English stage, virtually no heed is given to accuracy in emphasis. Actors do not think about it; audiences never hear of it. Even as I mention it now, the average theatrical reader will view it as a thing either foolish, fantastical or somebody's hobby-horse fad. In practise, it is almost as extinct as hawk-flying; yet, once, it was the very nerve and plexus of the actor's craft. So is it yet of right, however we may ignore it, when God in his mercy allows us to be favored with it, which is seldom. On the American as the English stage, our sins in regard to this gracious skill go beyond simple neglect. We have long tolerated, and have ended by fastening upon ourselves, a practise in which the lines of a play are not uttered after the manner of man's habituated speech and having regard to the meanings the words are designed to convey, but chanted or intoned in a kind of sing-song. The result of this enlightened procedure is that all meanings are trampled upon and kicked septemvious that there may be mere variations in key. Mark Twain unmercifully lampooned this habit as it showed itself in the pulpit; I know not why it always escapes on the stage, where it is twice as comical and six times as unreasonable. The priest has a traditional excuse to chant; the actor has none in the world. And next please kindly note that we reserve these barbarities for plays written in blank verse; prose we can usually utter upon the stage as if we were rational human beings striving to communicate with our fellow men. In a line of prose, we should never think of placing

the accent so as to reverse or destroy the plain meaning. No one would say in the prose of everyday life: "Come in and close *the* door," when the thought was a mere commonplace bid to enter. But, if the words were in a line of blank verse an actor could say them thus from the stage and neither he nor we should be surely aware of a blunder.

Now of all the blank verse plays, the plays of Shakespeare must suffer most from this cacophonous mishandling. The reason is apparent. While the thought of Shakespeare is sure and ultimately clear, it is seldom obvious and most often it is clothed in verbal subtleties, in the play of delicately shaded meanings, contrasted significances, ellipses, compound sentences, predications, beautiful, apt and true—but not simple. If there were nothing but his fondness for antithetical construction, this alone would be enough to demand that a reader mind his stops. You cannot hurdle over antitheses hit-or-miss. Despite this self-evident fact, which to every student of Shakespeare will be like the songs of childhood for triteness, most Shakespearean actors care nothing for it, but crash along through antitheses and all else, as one in haste knocks briars from his path.

It is in such practise much more than in any prejudice of the public that the ruin lies of which Shakespeare is supposed to be the orthographer.

This doctrine will instantly be denied by a chorus of sage commentators. Well, then, see how true it is. On the English-speaking stage, the elements in



acting most esteemed by actors and critics may be cited in this order: First, Action; second, Pose, or place in the picture; third, Degree of Force in Declamation; fourth, Voice; fifth, Costume. Long ago we came to deem acting to be synonymous with action. If an actor is to portray anger, let him do it with contorted visage and clenched fists, with shoutings and arm-wavings, for thus is emotion signaled on the stage. Readily we will admit that, in real life, the greatest emotion is expressed in the least vehemence; we will admit nothing of the kind about acting. About the sister art of oratory we have more wisdom. We can well understand the skill of Wendell Phillips (who probably had a greater effect upon his audiences than any other orator of any age, ancient or modern) when we read that he seldom made a gesture and seldom raised his voice; but, offhand, we should never believe that an actor could win by the like means to a like result.

In all this we have forgotten that the object of the actor, as of the orator, is not to score points or produce certain volumes of sound, but to transfer a feeling. Here, into these lines the incomparable drama-maker has wrought certain feelings that pertain to character, incident, scene or story; when these in their utmost great potency have been transferred to the listener, so that he, too, is infected with them, behold the cycle of art complete, the artist adequately functioning! Never will there be any such transference from the lines of Shakespeare when those lines are chanted, whined, sing-songed or

flipped unthoughtfully into the listener's bedinned and weary mind.

Still, any customary sins of any American or English actor in these ways have palliation enough. How should he do better? He never has been taught. How, if it comes to that, should he ever encompass anything about the bases of his art? We have no schools in which to teach him. The conservatoire is French, we have no conservatoire in the United States nor in England, nor anything like it; though the lack, if one will stop to think of it, seems wonderful. No young man would imagine he could become a violin virtuoso, let us say, without long and arduous technical training. For those that would paint, there are good enough art schools; for those that would sing, an ample choice of musical conservatories. The architects have their schools; the illustrators have theirs. But if one would practise the art of acting, as difficult, as technical, as recondite, as any of these, one must pick up as one can the waste strays of information and the vagrant hints of method. This is true, however callous we may have grown to it. Art is art; proficiency in art is won by hard and systematic labor and not through the caprices of the gods. Twenty years ago, Sarah Bernhardt called attention to this strange defect in American civilization, and predicted that in a short time we should have a conservatoire and that it would be of great excellence. She was too sanguine or too generous; we are as far to-day from a school of acting as we were then.

To this poverty we are so used that when we learn of the long and rigorous tuition a candidate for the French stage must undergo we are at first doubtful, then amused, and, finally, moved to contempt. What! Four years in a school of acting? As a rule, one of our actors does not spend there so many days. The difference must show racial inferiority. Yet, when we see French actors, we admit that they are the best in the world, and gauge from their strength the weakness of our own. The masterful ease and sure touch that so astonish and delight us in the French are the fruitage of the laborious conservatoire training; the crudities of our own stage grow from the want of such training.

Mme. Bernhardt in her book on stage-craft says that an actor while acting does not think of what he should do or how he should do it. In that one sentence she casts forth a flood of light upon the whole matter. If thoroughly trained, the actor does not think of these things because they have become with him instinctive (in an acquired way), intuitive, and almost involuntary. The well-drilled soldier does not think what he shall do when he hears the order to shoulder arms; his muscles perform the evolution without his conscious direction.

At the conservatoire, the greatest French actors give every year a certain part of their time to the teaching of the students; they are, in fact, professors there, these famous men and women. Bernhardt, Coquelin, Hading, Rejane, Monet Sully, Lucien Guitry, went daily to the classroom and gave

instruction, lecturing as professors lecture in a university. Suppose in America Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Charlotte Cushman, Clara Morris, had spent an hour every day for a month in each year teaching to classes of students the theory, principles and practise of the actor's art—how different would be to-day the state of the stage in America! And how different, probably, the point of view of the audiences! For one thing, those methods of restraint and reserve of power that made Booth so effective would be now more than the beloved memories of the lessening band that saw him; for they might be reproduced in a long line of his student heirs.

There is no such instruction, there is no such school. Our ambitious young actor must snatch up here and there fragments of information as Lazarus the crumbs of Dives. He sees a famous actor do something, and upon that elusive and fugitive model seeks to fashion something of his own. So, then, all he achieves is to give life to faults he was too unskilful to distinguish from virtues.

Nothing in current criticism on these matters ever enlightens him. Hence, misreadings become imbedded in stage tradition like fossils in the rocks.

Upon all this, too, the public, being inarticulate, is assumed to be indifferent or even content; yet, there is reason to think it is neither. Many a time, before an audience of English-speaking persons, a play of Shakespeare has been so lamely prepared as to its readings that one might say every line from



beginning to end was read wrongly; and yet to what applause and what enthusiasm! No doubt; but while few persons in that audience might be able to formulate a sense of want or define it, still fewer went away free from a feeling that something fell short, something was out of gear. The scenery was elaborate, the costumes were magnificent, the lighting effects gorgeous, or maybe novel, the actors of great renown; and withal something was wrong. Always, afterward, thinking of the performances, even amid the flare of much eulogy, the intelligent auditor was vaguely aware of deficiency. For that want, always felt, seldom expressed, no action, however vigorous or even skilful, and no vehemence of speech could atone.

If much can be said in defense of our actors, still more can be argued in behalf of our criticism. What could be more natural than that the professional and exclusive critic, writing daily about plays, writing once about a play of Shakespeare's and then one hundred times about the plays of other men, should come to regard Shakespeare merely as a play? Such a slip is more than only natural. In most cases it would be certain; the subtle power of the occupational habit and the sense of the guild would be enough to insure it. But, from first to last Miss Marlowe's convictions and point of view were out of line with this, and so was her practise always. To her mind even in her girlhood, strange to say, when she lived in surroundings that had little to do with reflective processes, a play by Shakespeare was at

least as much a profound exposition of principles of life as it was a story built out of life's exigencies. And this different conception and her faith in it made all the foundations of her labors. To bring forth and to lighten the hidden meanings of Shakespeare is another matter from acting the passions of his characters and is to be had only through ceaselessly attentive study of his words.

What comes of the hit-or-miss idea shown by the manager's blithesome view of "original readings" may be gathered from a few samples.

Nearly every *Macbeth* on the stage says:

If it were done when it *is* done.

This is a typical instance. In the closet the meaning of the line is so apparent a child could hardly miss the Shakespearean word-play. If the deed could be done and over with, no consequence following, all would be well. Therefore,

If it were *done* when it is *done*.

But, as it is usually read on the stage, all this meaning is bludgeoned into incoherence. The actor might as well be speaking in an alien tongue.

Nearly every *Hamlet* on the English-speaking stage says:

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamed of in *your* philosophy.

This means, if it means anything, that *Hamlet* is drawing a distinction between *Horatio's* philosophy

and another's, perhaps his own. The least acquaintance with the literature of the time would cause this to look silly in any actor's eyes. He could find an analogue to the passage even in the same play. Is it not amazing that with such guide posts staring him in the eyes any actor could manage to go a-mooning? And, yet, the actors do, nineteen in twenty, and are bepraised for it.

Nearly all *Hamlets* say:

The funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage *tables*.

So read, these lines mean that the funeral baked meats might properly have furnished forth the marriage chairs, candle-sticks or joint-stools, but that they should furnish forth tables was beyond bearing. In type, the antithesis seems as big as a church by daylight, but many actors have gone by and have never seen it, including one celebrated *Hamlet* that received the somewhat frazzled honor of an English knighthood.

One of the most eminent actresses of her times and especially commended for her *Lady Macbeth* invariably made that unfortunate character say:

Had he not *resembled* my father as he slept,  
I had done't.

Beyond this in blundering, it seems humanly impossible to go. The sleeping Duncan might have *resembled* any one of seven million other men and *Lady Macbeth's* resolution would have moulted no

feather. It was because he resembled *her father* that her hardihood failed her.

A distinguished English actor, now gone to his reward, used always to say:

The *labor* we delight in physics pain

and

Thy bones *are* marrowless

and

*Take* any shape but that.

To read the lines backward could hardly make them less intelligible.

I have heard *Iagos* that said:

*Though* in the trade of war I have slain men

and *Othellos* that said:

*Were* it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
Without a prompter.

It appears, therefore, that one reason why Shakespeare is so commonly misread is because the actor will not take the trouble to meditate upon the lines; he will not look before and after and search out significance; he reads with his eyes but not with his mind. Ages ago, an actor of eminence so mangled this passage, and who shall exert himself to question the tradition?

In big parts and little, by great actors and obscure, line after line goes halt.

If we are indifferent to the pivotal importance of this phase of acting, other peoples are of another



thought about it. Listen to a German tragedian, or heed Mme. Bernhardt in her book, *The Art of the Theater*. After dwelling upon the importance of utterance, she says, somewhat petulantly, one may think, but with substantial truth:

The real difficulty about correct articulation in the theater as well as at the bar, is to know how to give to words their proper value. As to this, intelligence alone can guide the artist, and there is no method that can transform the dullard into a being of efficient mind.

A little later, when she has counseled young actors to study attentively the work of Lucien Guitry because he is faultless in utterance, she says that they will then understand "how the time devoted to the preparing of a single phrase is often the touchstone of an entire state of mind, and of that phrase they will find that the tonic accent on a single word is the power that lights up all for the audience.

"The tonic accent on a single word," says she. It is the heart of the whole consideration here.

What Mme. Bernhardt set down as a rule, Julia Marlowe felt as acting's inherent truth. From the beginning she cast aside all tradition and sought to utter each line thus in exact accord with its meaning. In her pupilage many persons of the best intentions undertook to show her the methods and manners of her predecessors. To these she gave thanks, and no serious attention. If we wish to know the road to achievement, we might take note of this showing of a spirit scornful of convention and com-

pletely loyal to its own ideals. Since it was a spirit to be seen at the outset of her career as much as later, it must have been native and unacquired. The study that made her Elizabethan in her sympathies was no task to her; she had delight in it. Hence came a phenomenon often noted. She had at the first and always kept the joyful allegiance of every Shakespearean that heard her. A sentence or two fell from her lips and they hailed her of the fellowship. They knew well enough that no one ever so uttered Shakespeare except one that had read ponderingly. She, too, then must have searched for the "dram of eale" and questioned about samphire's dreadful trade; she had been plucking at the heart of mysteries and sitting up to thumb the *Variorum*, weighing out antitheses and losing herself in miracles of character drawing. When she came to a disputed, difficult, or unobvious line, she spoke as one having authority. Hence, the student's ideal.

In reality, although little was ever said of it, this is the quality that has contributed most to her success. Her voice, her grace, her womanly charm, her transparent sincerity and high purpose all counted heavily on her side; but it was her intelligent and masterly reading that captured and held masses of listeners that could never have defined and little perceived the nature of the spell. Without their knowledge, she had won them by an impeccable lucidity. The element in her work they hailed as new lay in this, that, without the least regard to how

others had read a line, she pursued indefatigably the way to read it aright.

The record of her labors in these researches is in the prompt-books she made for all the plays in which she appeared. Old actors have said that in our times, at least, no such prompt-books have been seen from any other hand. Her way was to take a page of text and paste it upon a page of a blank book much larger. Then, with insatiable care, she marked every emphasis and covered all the marginal space with minute annotations as to meaning, purpose, business, intonation, gesture. On each rôle, she spent months and sometimes years of diligent study and patient review before she was willing to essay it; reading the commentators, weighing the meanings, testing emphases, fitting the character into its times and background, putting Rolfe by the side of Theobald and White by Steevens, until, at last, the competent mistress of the full significance of the rôle as a definite creation in art, she walked upon the stage to delineate it and never knew trepidation or misgiving; for there was not a syllable in any line or a second in any situation that she had left unconquered in her study.

It is her complete, intuitive perception of such truths that has most differentiated Julia Marlowe, I think, from other good actresses of her time. Her beatitude was to look upon her art with profound and inviolable respect as functioning not to help to an evening of mumming, but to transfer from the text, where they lay dormant, the feelings that

pertained to the characters she assumed. She deemed that, in releasing from the cold type these feelings, clothing them with life and transferring them to others, she was performing the real and ultimate office of art as truly as any other artist ever did or could perform it by whatsoever means, and to that ideal she resolutely adhered.

For, she had a religion of beauty, thought of art as beauty's priestess and believed in the ethical mission of both as her covenanting ancestors had believed in the Westminster confession.

It is evident that we deal here with an extraordinary spirit; clear, strong, quietly unafraid, tireless and high visioned. In the hope that its records will be something more than a story of effort and success, will be also a human document of the power of lofty purpose, I have ventured to set them down in the following pages.

New York.

C. E. R.

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# JULIA MARLOWE

HER LIFE AND ART





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### CHAPTER I

#### CUMBERLAND HILLS



O slight a thing as the flicking of a whip-lash, gave to America its greatest Shakespearean actress.

In 1870, John Frost was the keeper of a small general store in the village of Caldbeck, Cumberlandshire, England. His fame was considerable in those parts, but not in ways to win favor with the sedate. He was fond of his glass, fond of jovial company, a good judge of horses, and a conscientious patron of all local sports. The Cumberland farmer stock, of which he came, was nothing remarkable; his father and mother inn-keepers at the market place of Carlisle; himself launched upon life there as apprentice to a shoemaker. His good looks and merry wit had won him to wife Sarah Hodgson, born Sarah Strong, a noted countryside beauty of Caldbeck, daughter of a long line of tenant farmers, and several years his junior. Only by her thrift and good management after her marriage, enough money had been saved to make this venture in

rural merchandising, which was profitable in small returns and had with it a comely enough tenement for the family that conducted it.

In her success she was vindicating a race. She was all Cumberland; and Cumberland folk, one might say, are of their own kind, so strongly marked are their characteristics. In language no less than in physical attributes and praiseworthy habits, they have distinction. Their peculiar dialect, English as they are in feeling, is so nearly Scandinavian, that Norwegians suddenly projected into Cumberland wilds and speaking only their own tongue, have been able to understand and be understood by the natives; and in the way of good looks, there is no other region in England with so many blue-eyed people. To this ornament, they can read their title clear as day; mostly they are straight descendants of Scandinavian pirates that about the ninth century landed upon the coast, viewed with approval the hinterland, drove out its inhabitants, and took it for their own. Ever since, they have been noted for a stiff-necked and much cherished independence, a habit of excessive industry, and the mental state that furnished Covenanters and sent them, with unruffled composure, to battle, to the boots or to the stake, as might be.

They have character and care not who knows it. To this day in Caldbeck, the native with whom you converse looks you straight in the eye, batting not a lid, and never glancing aside, whether speaking or listening.

No one could call the region rich; the struggle to live is hard upon these people; but it has not here, as on some other thin soils, indurated the inhabitants. Back of their taciturnity, the Cumberlanders have an equally marked and quite genuine kindliness, and the old Northland spirit of hospitality. Nowhere more than at Caldbeck, about which there may be some vague inheritance or effect of tradition; the town began in the eleventh century as a hospice and refuge "for travelers crossing the dangerous moors." Perhaps it has changed no more in spirit than in aspect, which the visitor now is assured has altered nothing since the days of the Bonnie Prince. Three hundred people may inhabit its spick and span houses strung along the highway, up the hill to the schoolhouse and around to the left, in what is called Upton. But the chief of it lies in a vale under the shoulders of swelling hills, vivid green with crops, or colored up with heather, and always good to look at.

In that part of the world Strong is a great name among the peasants. You can find Strong's in all the region cemeteries, their headstones bearing testimonials to their virtues, not always with uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd. Cumberland Strong's fought with Cromwell and at Preston Pans; Strong's seem to have been equally ready at a border grapple, farming and the kirk. Sarah's father varied a family habit by dying comparatively young; after which her mother married into the Hodgsons, another old Cumberland family, members of which

had fought side by side with the Strongs up and down the border marches.

The old lady was worthy of wearing such names. She lived at Knocker House, on the crest of Knocker Hill, just above and overlooking Caldbeck, where, it is related, she made profit from the few acres and stony comprising the little farm. If the feat seems now astonishing, it was not so to her local contemporaries to whom she was well known for her indomitable will, piercing eyes, prodigious energy, and fixed habit of command. She managed more than the farm; on all persons around her she had her will for mere awe of her; even upon her son Jim although he was man grown and had a great beard. For years she frightened him from the marriage he wished to make; and when he died he was still, because of her, unmated. Yet she had a kindly heartiness, was accounted good to children, and passed away somewhere in her nineties, respected by everybody and much more admired than beloved.

Now John Frost, oddly enough, was the perfect representative of the other end of Cumberland life. It is a hunting country, with ancient revered traditions of open air adventure and wild life on the fells. You shall not go far in those precincts without hearing much of John Peel, gallant and romantic figure of a century ago, whose exploits seem made out of a book, and are told with admiring awe by Lusty Juventus and with stern face of reproof by the orderly. He was born close by, at Greenrigg; his four-roomed house is still shown to those thought

worthy, and his favorite tavern adorns Caldbeck, where he took his ease in his own inn and many cups after a day of hard hunting on the fells. "When he wasn't hunting, he was aye drinking," runs the local eulogy. The division of time could hardly have been equal, for it is soberly recorded of him that every week-day, for fifty years, he started out in the gray of the morning for the chase over the Cumberland moors. He died at the tender age of seventy-eight, and hunted until almost the last. He was at once a daring rider, a roisterer that reveled within bounds, a honey-voiced singer in the ale houses, a picturesque dresser, and a sentimental egotist, shedding tears at the recital of his own great merits. Woodcock Graves, an otherwise forgotten poet, who was a tavern crony of this hero, made a song of him one night when both sat late over their wine, a song that has gone around the world and come back:

D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gray,  
Who hunted in Caldbeck once on a day?

They sang it there in John Frost's time, they sing it still, everybody sings it; for it has been officially adopted as the hymn of the Cumberland regiment of great renown, and therefore ranks next to the National Anthem. Tradition is a great matter in an old country. If Sarah Strong had back of her the grim and iron-sided piety of the Covenanters, John Frost had the fame of John Peel to sustain, and, up to that mark lived in a rather painful fidelity.



With other things he was mindful of Peel's repute for fine clothing, and went himself gayly clad, even before he could honestly afford the least luxury.

The little business at Caldbeck prospering, he came to own horses and a drag, wherewith he went to the greyhound coursing and other sporting events, and infallibly to the races at Carlisle or Penryth. He had four children, Jane, Sarah Frances, George and Annie. Sarah Frances had been born August 17, 1865, in the store tenement at Caldbeck. At the time her destiny was determined by the whiplash, she was scarce five years old. The summer was on; John Frost drove his drag as usual to the Carlisle races. It is possible that fortune had been kind that day in the betting ring, and conceivable that the bell-mouthed glass had wrought with him, though he was not given to intoxication. On the way home he overtook another native, likewise in a drag. In these conditions, an impromptu race was plainly indicated. Frost's horse outfooted the other. As he swept triumphantly by, he flaunted his whip toward his beaten rival, who instantly emitted a piercing yell, dropped his reins and clapped both hands to his right eye.

"You have knocked out my eye!" he screamed. "You have knocked out my eye."

Panic terror seized upon John Frost. Visions of jail, the county assizes, life imprisonment, or even the gallows possessed him. He lashed his horse and fled for home, where he told his wife what had happened, threw some clothing into a valise, and



KNOCKER HOUSE ON KNOCKER HILL  
HOME OF GRANDMOTHER HODGSON



*Photographs by F. W. Tassel and Son*

JULIA MARLOWE'S BIRTHPLACE  
THE STORE AND TENEMENT AT CALDBECK, ENGLAND



slipped out into the night. Alternately hiding and traveling, he made his way to Liverpool, where, under an assumed name, he took ship for America. It was the country of his dreams; he had long hoped to go there, and it came first into his mind when he needed sanctuary.

Mrs. Frost, left thus to manage business and family, showed what stuff the Strongs were made of. She kept her husband's secret as well as she kept the store; turned to the world a front of aplomb, and piled up the little profits. The older children, Jane and Sarah Frances, were already in school; so to call it. A stern-faced lady of the neighborhood maintained a kind of crèche, whither infants were sent to keep them from under the impatient feet of busy housewives. Nevertheless, Sarah Frances cherished in after years clear enough recollections of this as a place of primitive tuition. Indeed, she seems to have come to herself there, sitting by the fire in a low chair and, for lack of better occupation, kicking to and fro her feet, shod in copper-toed shoes. This is the earliest glimpse of her childhood that still lives in her memory. A flower was on the teacher's desk, a lily rising from the neck of a green glass bottle. Of knowledge more pertinent to life and its work, she seems to have gathered only the beginnings of the rudiments of the art of reading. Yet she can recall a public exhibition, at which she was presented with a red glass mug, bearing the original and uplifting information that it was "For a Good Girl," and she can remember the Easter Monday holiday

of that year, and going with the other children to roll downhill in a linsey-woolsey gown.

But the physical aspect of the country made more impression and was always afterward perfectly mirrored in her mind. Great green hills, streams running between them, brown rocks, red heather, solemn old trees, and the ceaseless procession of sunlight and cloud shade over the fields, she knew well. It is a region whose beauty has been attested by eminent authorities. A certain poetic charm pertains to it, and a poetic tradition is one of its inheritances, not without reason. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey are inseparably connected with it, for it hangs to the reverend skirts of the Lake Region; Keswick is not far away; Greta Hall, where Southey dwelt so long and where he boarded the penniless Coleridge, is still shown there. Shelley with his girl bride lived for a time close by; Gray made tours through all these passes. From Knocker Hill on a clear day, if such there be, one can see Skiddaw, that mountain of so many memories and verses. Walking pilgrims come up that way from their devoirs at Windermere. Lovers of Wordsworth begin at once to notice the beauty of the hills and glens as something familiar. He has celebrated them.

A stream flows through this village and gave name to it; a Wordsworthian stream, typical; a kind of ever-flowing stanza of himself. Beck is Cumberland for brook; Caldbeck is Cold Brook. If it had been made to order it could hardly be better for an old-fashioned engraving or chromo; the never-fail-



ing brook, the busy mill, and all that. The trees overhang it as in the old pictures; there is an entrancing old bridge, in all respects as it should be, and some meadow, with cattle. Oh, yes!—and there are sheep; in the road, wonderful, fat, white sheep. LaRolle would have loved this country, or Troyon. A branch of that Cold Brook ran at the back of the store tenement. Sarah Frances used to lie awake at night and listen to its singing. Between it and the house was a garden, filled with flowers. She grew up among flowers; they are a specialty of Caldbeck. In front of Beech Cottage, Mrs. Frost's birthplace, was another garden where the little girl went to play, and it, too, was a riot of color.

For these reasons, the first things she noticed were things connected with or suggesting beauty. No impressionable mind could be born into such a country without some enduring consequences. It is a good region for the making of artists; everything around speaks beauty, strength, and the repose and goodness of nature, not too much plagued with the inventions of men. To this day it remains unspoiled of its kind. No railroad, for example, has ever disturbed the antique peace and charm of Caldbeck; if you would visit it you must go by wagon road, the work of Roman legionaries, maybe, and therefore based for the ages.

Sarah Frances knew so well the look of the hills and the dark green corners among them that years afterward she could have gone the country paths with her eyes shut. Her father noticed that she

liked to be out-of-doors, which he deemed a good sign, and used to take her with him when he went in the wagon to make deliveries outside of the village. One place she always wished to go to was Knocker Hill, where she had established a close but incongruous partnership with old Mrs. Hodgson of the field-marshal ways. There must have been between these two some intellectual or spiritual kinship not obvious to the others; at least, such is the suggestion of an early incident. Strong's and Hodgson's, you must know, were all Wesleyans of the straitest sect. Despite the somewhat godless presence of John Frost, Sarah Frances was reared in the atmosphere of the conventicle, and a shock went through the family circle when the desolating fact was made known that she had failed in her first catechism. Around the fireside, ill was augured from this portent; it was Grandmother Hodgson that defended the culprit and insisted she should have another chance.

Not in that household as in some others did the catechism and the Bible represent the limit of literary resources; there was Robert Burns, who was Mrs. Frost's passion. He stood on the shelf, well worn, beside the Family Bible, and next also in reverence; *sed longo intervallo*, of course. With the copper-toed shoes and the dame school, Sarah Frances recalled afterward the familiar sight of her mother declaiming with gusto the "Cotter's Saturday Night," which she held to represent the attainable summit of poetic creation.

In even so much of addiction to the arts, she was departing from the standards of the family. If, in its short and simple annals, any other member disclosed a taste for expression the fact is unknown to history. Years afterward Mrs. Frost made inquiry on this subject, but beyond a tradition that one Strong had played in a village band her researches were barren. And even the full name of the player and a specification of the instrument he played had been lost to fame.

John Frost, a fugitive in America, still haunted by his thoughts about the whiplash, came to anchor in far-away Kansas and sent for his family to join him. The capable Sarah Strong Frost placidly sold out the little store business, the horses, the wagon, and the drag, and taking the four children under her wing, set out upon this far trekking in strange lands. They went by wagon to old Penryth and thence by railroad to Liverpool, where the mother bought steerage passage for New York. She was of the country and unsophisticated, but her purpose was firm that none of the villains she knew to lie in wait for rusticity should gain any of John Frost's slender hoard. Upon the inside of her dress-front she sewed the money she had received from the sale of store and horses, and so armored, faced unflinchingly the wiles of a wicked world.

The *Java* was the name of the steamship; an ancient, stumbling, ill-favored craft. Sarah Frances afterward recalled the rough bunks, unpainted stanchions, unkempt deck spaces and queer corners of the

steerage where she and the other children played games, while they wondered at the pitching ship and the strange noises of the pounding seas. One night was stamped deeply upon her childish memory. There was a terrific storm, the waves broke over the bow and flooded the steerage deck, and she can still see her mother sitting in her bunk with her arms around her children, crying.

But the *Java*, not much bigger than a ship's launch of these days, won safely to Castle Garden, where the Cumberlanders glimpsed New York and made acquaintance with mosquitoes and other strange matters. Thence to Philadelphia, where their mother astonished and perplexed them by telling them their name was no longer Frost, but Brough, which had been the maiden name of John Frost's mother and which he had borne in America. Why Brough? said they, but had no answer. All they knew or ever knew was that they were scolded if they referred to themselves as Frosts, and by this easy metamorphosis was Sarah Frances Frost become Fanny Brough. It is to be noted as commentary, maybe, on the irrationalities of life and fate that all these shiftings and migratings were unnecessary. The supposed victim of John Frost's whiplash was but a bumpkin mummer with a perverted sense of humor. His eye was all uninjured and the whole Frost family might have rested in Caldbeck until the last trump. This, of course, suggests speculations as to the probable career in that case of Sarah Frances, from which the only probability seeming to emerge

is that the heir of the spirit of all the Stronges would not have been content to buy eggs and measure butter in Cumberland.

The journey across the United States in an emigrant train, year of grace 1870, and to a family fresh from the Arcadian solitudes of Cumberland, must have abounded in interest, much of it of a pungent nature; but Fanny Brough afterward recalled little about it except the inevitable shock when she saw her new home. This was in a frontier settlement then known as Lenassee, situate near the present town of Olathe and about twenty-five miles west of Kansas City. Of the subsequent fate of Lenassee history is silent, but it seems either to have dried up and blown away or to have changed its name, which does not now adorn any map I have been able to consult. Extinction would seem the likelier fate, for everything in that region was unstable and transitory. Frontier is a term of accuracy as applied to Lenassee and environs. Red Indians still lurked about the river bluffs and gullies and the mere name of them shook with haunting horrors the souls of the newcomers. Life for them suddenly became a flood of bewildering anxieties. By day the covered wagons of migrating pioneers moved westward over the atrocious roads, piloted by strange, rough, bearded men, heavily armed and terrifying; by night the children were assailed with dreams of tomahawks, scalping knives and painted Redskins.

It was late autumn when they ventured into that



wilderness, and before long they were caught up in the wonder of another novel experience. A blizzard swept the prairies and, drifting over the fences and bushes, obliterated the trails. The intense cold, the howling of the wind, and the savage pelt-ing of the snow filled the children with vague alarms, and when they added thoughts of the Indians and the probability that all would be scalped before morning they remembered with tears the calm security of Cumberland.

John Brough had opened a store in the settlement and taken a house with a piece of land near the railroad station. It was a place of refuge that the Cumberlanders maintained there, a most curious replica of the original Caldbeck and the hospice for "travelers over the dangerous moors." Prairie schooners hove to at its door for help, needles, comfort, and meals; half-frozen trainmen bundled in to thaw themselves at Mrs. Brough's roaring fire. Once a passenger train stalled in a snow-drift. The Broughs put on their wraps, hauled half-gelid travelers from car windows, and sheltered and fed them until the crew dug the engine clear.

All were workers in that busy household; even the children had regular tasks of sweeping, dusting, and bringing in wood. Still, they found time to go to a school, kept precariously in a corner of the settlement church by a lady that had seen better days but not much better educational facilities. Fanny went with the rest, learned how to rub a frosted nose with snow, and toiled to enlarge, from an aged spelling



book of musty flavor, the bounds of her cultural stores. She was experiencing even then the luck that always attended her about such matters; whatever education she was to acquire must be wrested from the very fist of adverse conditions.

When summer came, Brough was again wandering. At Ironton, Ohio, he found what seemed to be a promising opening, and thither the family went, leaving Lenassee, it may be believed, without regret. After twelve months at Ironton, Brough made another move, this time to Portsmouth, Ohio. There was little change in the family lot, which continued to be poverty and struggle. The father's way of life was uncertain; most of the time the children had neither sight nor knowledge of him; and the capable mother, daughter of a line of Strong's, must steer the family craft and provision it as well. From Portsmouth Brough disappeared entirely for months; when he returned the children learned that he had taken a notion to visit Australia, and thither had gone, in his usual light-hearted and irresponsible way. It seems that no man was ever less weighed upon by the duties of fatherhood, and, but for the money once sewed up the mother's dress front and for her business-like conduct of a boarding house, the wolf might have much more than looked in at the window.

As in Kansas, the children must work and get their tuition as they could; Fanny, for example, wielding a broom twice her own weight and bustling about the kitchen. Life seemed to her a serious

business now: mostly it consisted of unremitting labor.

"I have no pleasant recollections of my childhood, if I can be said to have had any," she said long afterward; "it was all sordid and hard. I will except from the generally drab tinge of my recollections the hills about Caldbeck and the woods about Portsmouth. The best picture I have is of the woods in the fall. The leaves were brilliantly colored; it must have been the first time I had ever really seen an American fall; and the solemn stillness in the air and the gorgeous tints on the trees seemed to me wonderful. Pawpaws were ripe on the hillsides. I organized an expedition among the girls and we played hookey and went to the woods and gathered bright-colored leaves and picked pawpaws. I was punished for playing hookey, but I remember thinking that the leaves were worth all they cost."

From Portsmouth, after another year, the family drifted to Cincinnati, where Mrs. Brough opened a small hotel, and her husband worked (sometimes) at shoemaking. As for Fanny, she began here to show that her casual schooling had at least bred in her, or fostered, a passion for reading, genuine, insatiable, and at first helter-skelter, as might be supposed. Anything in English print looked good to her, from the Family Bible (when there was nothing else) to what were then called "dime novels," of which at the mature age of eight she was a connoisseur. Stories of adventure were her fancy; Indians,

pirates, or detectives, but let it be something stirring, with the hero escaping by skill and a hair's breadth from the dastardly foe. The most singular thing about this is that next to reading thrillers she liked to read poetry, a conjunction of tastes rarer than charity, but in her case native and unstimulated.

Or it may be that the poetry part of it was the fruitage of Burns, the immortal Cotter and the rest, echoes of which used to ring through her head while she was swinging the broom or wearing out the dish-cloth. Before she was nine she knew by heart all the standard poetical effusions in the school readers, "Tell Me not in Mournful Numbers," "The Assyrian Came Down," the "Battle of Waterloo," and the like lustrous gems. The delight of her life was to get into the attic alone, curl up in a corner with a book and read till the place grew dark and her mother's ominous footstep was swift upon the stairs. She played hookey from work to read; that was the trouble. A season of "Deadwood Dick" comes naturally in healthy children and passes like measles or whooping cough. About two years was its period in this instance, wherein appetite was chiefly satiated through the inexpensive columns of the ancient *New York Weekly*, long defunct. It was succeeded by the historical romance, when Scott became wizard of her wonder and Diana Vernon the all too lovely heroine. From reading stories to making them was easy progression. When she felt that the novelist had not quite hit the mark she supplied the lack from her own imagination, and so, like other children of

strong and independent character, came to live in a world peopled with beings of her own devising. This was an exercise with two advantages. It eased the drudgery at home and provided her with companionship, which seems otherwise to have been lacking.

In school she managed without much exertion to keep at or near the head of her class, of which she was usually the youngest member, and to mount with the rest from grade to grade. She never pretended that in more than one respect the place had exhilaration for her, and that one was clearly an anomaly. Contrary to the universal experience of school children she found an interest in what the others called the torture Fridays, when they had declamations and dialogues to go through with. She thought some of the dialogues were good and took part in them with zest, to the wondering delight of teachers worn out in trying to drive the others up to that hated employment.

But as to the rest of the school, Fanny Brough had a difficulty of her own. In her reading she had so overshot her years she had taken on notions of a world all different from anything around her. Not the dime novel world, which she was too childishly wise not to see was mere stuff; but another kind, a world in which men and women had rational objects and won them. She had begun even then to gain some vague notion of the joy of achievement. Exactly what it meant she did not know, but she had often come upon it in her books; the idea of going

out into the world and making a place in it, creating or expressing; the mysterious lure she had heard described as "doing something." They were often set forth there, the instances of men and women that had started from conditions as scowling as those around her and had gone thence to fame and success; and she felt in the queer and dreamy way of childhood that she would like to walk that same road.

For some of this she was indebted to her mother. It was a fixed habit of that excellent lady to include in her homilies to her children forceful reminders of their opportunities in a new and free country.

"Here you can make of yourselves anything you set out to make" was her favorite text, assuring little George, with total disregard of the American constitution, that he could be President of the United States, and pointing to others the moral (dubious, perhaps) of gentlemen that in those days were mounting from poverty to wealth. It is to be supposed that the admirable Mrs. Frost's ideas of "doing something" differed from those of her second daughter, who was finding in her books and in her own untrammelled way her own notions about the world and its prize-wreaths.

Untrammelled she surely was in that respect. Nobody gave the least heed to what the child was reading. She read every moment she could pluck from the routine of work and the hours of school, and might as easily have continued to fill her mind with ineffable trash for all anybody knew or cared; for here again is the odd fact that she never had a



friend or confidant. In all the years of her childhood she never encountered any person, young or old, with whom she exchanged intimacies. She never even had much to do with what ought to be the prerogative of childhood—playthings and so on. From the beginning she was driven in upon herself. In after years when she came to know about the generality of life and to hear of child friendships and playmates she wondered at her own isolation and could not recall that it was either her choosing or her fault. She could romp when she had a chance and at one time could skip the rope better and longer than any other child on her block. But she never had a girl chum, and remembering that lack, it seemed to her as if there had been two of her, one dreaming and reading, the other working and making her way through the school routine; the two not mixing and going on equally unfriended.

Another thing that seemed to her wonderful was that, left to her own guidance, the books she read were on the whole so good. She recalled that while she was still a girl she had fallen upon a volume of Wordsworth and found things in it that gave her infinite delight. "It was like a poultice," she said, "soothing and healing." She never lost the liking; something about the sure, lucid, competent, straightforward art of Wordsworth appealed powerfully to her. She felt instinctively without the least reasoning about it that here was a method in expression that touched something akin in herself. It will be noticed that this is a story of odd little coin-



cidences. Here then is another. A girl of the Lake Region found in the poet of the Lake Region some strange, subtle, compelling harmony or sympathy or something else that she knew better than she could define. She did not see Cumberland Hills as she read, but she felt them; a triumph of sense greater than seeing and a principle of art to which she afterward had occasion to come back with interest.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM SIR JOSEPH PORTER TO MARIA



THREE years went by thus in Cincinnati, the economics of the Brough household growing neither better nor worse. Fanny of the independent spirit, amateur chambermaid in her mother's hotel, and diligent patron of the attic study, had attained, with the aid of the public library, to a wide field of reading. In school she had gone, not too triumphantly, to the seventh grade. She was accustomed now to read not only books but whatever newspapers came across her way. In October, 1876, she having but lately passed her eleventh birthday and her head being more than ever filled with notions about doing something in the world, her eye fell one morning upon an advertisement in a journal of that day calling for children to sing and act in a juvenile performance of "Pinafore."

It was her custom to take her own way without seeking anybody's advice or warrant. She cut the advertisement from the newspaper, put it into her pocket, went to school, and as soon as the hour of dismissal came that afternoon started out alone to find the advertiser. She was not dismayed to learn that the address was that of a pawn-shop kept by

one Cohen, nor beset by misgivings on any other account. She did not know whether she could sing, and had as little reason to believe she could act. It was hard for her to tell afterward exactly why she went upon such an unpromising venture, but she knew she had a feeling that here was a path that might lead to that newer world in which she had been imagining herself and was glad to take the chances whatever they might be.

Without trepidation she opened the door and marched in, the advertisement clenched in her little fist. The wife of the proprietor received her, and lifted eyebrows when she found that the visit was about the "Pinafore" troupe; she was accustomed to have applicants appear with their mothers. Mrs. Cohen was a kindly, good soul. She looked with sympathetic interest at the queer little figure upright there before her, and said at last she thought the visitor would do for a place in the chorus. The project, she explained, was for a company of children to play not in Cincinnati but in small towns about the country.

"Of course, your mother is willing to have you go," she said, looking down into the big sober eyes fixed upon her from the other side of the counter.

"I don't know," said the slim young person there. "I never asked her."

The matron gasped. "Well, you run home," she said, "and see if she will consent. If she will, be here at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning ready to start."

Fanny went home, but asked no questions. She

merely announced that she was going. Mrs. Brough was shocked, but in the face of this resolute young thing felt powerless to resist. Besides, she ascertained that the enterprise was genuine and worthy and the children would be cared for. The pawnbroker's shop was but a device of convenience; Mrs. Cohen's interest went no farther than the four children of hers that were to take part in the piece. The real engineer, planner and executive was Colonel Robert E. J. Miles, a theatrical manager once writ large in theatrical fame, but now, I must suppose, mostly forgotten. His sister-in-law, Miss Ada Dow, was to go with the little performers and look after them. Among these Fanny Brough was hired to make one of the sailors' chorus—salary \$7 a week.

That very next night at Vincennes, Indiana, clad in wide blue trousers, white collar and traditional tie with sailor's knot, she made her first appearance on any stage.

"When the curtain went up," she said afterward, "I looked out with curiosity upon the people beyond the footlights, and thought it was a funny sight—a thousand heads and no bodies! I was not the least frightened or concerned, but had a sense of excitement and of having good fun. Of course, I had not been half trained or rehearsed, but I had been told to do what the others did, and I did it. I must have gone through without being too conspicuously awkward; there was no complaint that I can remember."

Indeed she must have done much better than that, for she had not been long with the company when she found herself suddenly promoted to the rôle of *Sir Joseph Porter*. This for a little girl that a few weeks before did not know whether she could sing at all might be deemed a remarkable advance. She was rehearsed for *Sir Joseph*, but the time was short, and she went on the first night ill-prepared. She knew well enough that she was not up in the lines, and resorted to native wit for help. With a pencil she wrote on the cuffs of her costume all of *Sir Joseph's* cues. Part of her stage business was to turn at intervals, raise her eye-glass and inspect the sailors. When she felt at a loss for her line she would seem to perform this trick while she covertly searched her cuffs to refresh her memory.

One-night stands through the Middle West were the lot of "The Children's 'Pinafore' Company." There were fifty in the troupe, among them more than one destined to after fame. Arthur Dunn played *Dick Deadeye*, and his sister Jennie was the *Josephine*. Off the stage all wore a kind of uniform, and when they marched the street from station to hotel the entire town came forth to stare and to applaud. Financially the enterprise was for a time a notable success; there were always packed houses. The idea was immediately copied, and children's opera companies—an odd revival of the "little eyases" of Shakespeare's day—became a fashion.

In Colonel Miles's company the musical director was Carlo Torrigani, an excellent musician and the

nerve center of the performance. He observed with attention the work of Fanny Brough, and came to the conclusion that there was in her the possibility of great things. Therefore he tried to teach her. At one place in the piece *Sir Joseph*, off the stage, is heard to say loudly, "I am the monarch of the seas," and enters singing a solo. Little Miss Brough had a notion that the signal for the line, "I am the monarch of the seas" should be certain notes played by the orchestra. Signor Torrignani thought the line should be spoken first and then the orchestra should begin to play. He labored zealously and with patient good nature to induce *Sir Joseph* to follow this procedure. He might as well have saved his breath. "I wait until I hear that tune," says Miss Brough. "It's this," and she hums the air. "Then I say, 'I am the monarch of the seas,' and come on. That's the best way." Argument, appeal, even Miss Dow, all are in vain; little Miss Brough has it according to her own ideas; the spirit of the Strong's triumphs, and the orchestra plays the air before she speaks.

"The Children's 'Pinafore' Company" lasted throughout that winter. Nearly every town in the Middle West was favored with its visitations. The atmosphere of the stage began to have a certain influence upon Fanny Brough's thinkings. In dressing-room after dressing-room of the theaters wherein she appeared she saw upon the walls photographs or lithographs of famous actresses. Who is this? Clara Morris. Who, then, is Clara



Morris? The story of many a stage career began to weave itself into the imaginative lore with which she was still busy. Now the heroine of her self-made romances that began with nothing and achieved to greatness became an actress. She herself was acting; and by all accounts, if the nightly approval of the audience made for a verdict, if the opinion of the director meant anything, she was acting well. She determined for a stage career and that same moment settled with herself that she would succeed in it.

It was a time when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" represented to millions of minds the dazzling heights of theatrical glory. Many "Uncle Tom's Cabin" companies were going about the country gathering money and plaudits. Often "The Children's 'Pinafore' Company" encountered dead walls flaming with pictures of *Little Eva* and *Lawyer Marks*, *St. Clair* and *Topsy*, life-size and all-glorious in red and purple. Little Miss Brough had never seen the play, but she had read the book and knew the story. By this time "Pinafore" had lost for children the zest of novelty, and Miss Brough deemed the time required her to refresh them with a diversified interest. She organized them into an "Uncle Tom's Cabin Company." For herself she took the part of *Uncle Tom* (which she conceived to afford an ambitious star the richest possibilities), while she also performed the duties of playwright, general director, producer and stage manager. The parts she wrote out herself and taught to the others.

Usually, the children in whatsoever town they happened to be, had the run of the local theater on the day of the performance and were unmolested by the tolerant or admiring stage hands. At Marshall, Michigan, the new impresario concluded that a rehearsal was now required of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (revised version), and called one for that morning on the stage of the Marshall Opera House. She had arranged a telling scene, being the sale of *Uncle Tom* into slavery, and on trial that morning it seemed to go well and according to her desires, except for one thing. She wanted a curtain fall at the end.

The Marshall Opera House was provided with an ancient drop of the style known in theaters as the "barrel." That is, the curtain was wound about a great cylinder of wood, and was operated with a cord, on the pulling of which the barrel unrolled and the curtain descended. Miss Brough had observed the workings of this antique contrivance and thought she understood it. The rope that released the barrel was tied upon the wall, well out of her reach. Was she one to be baffled by such an obstacle? Not if she was quite herself that day. She looked about the stage until she found a ladder, tugged it into position against the wall and proceeded with the rehearsal.

At the moment of the climax she rushed from the hands of the ever-infamous *Legree*, climbed up the ladder and pulled the rope. With speed down came the barrel. One part of the stage manager's task

she had overlooked—the right placing of the actors when the curtain should fall. Three of the performers in that mighty climax were in the way of the barrel. It caught them upon their heads, there was a violent outcry, a hurried call for a doctor, and this version of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was lost to the world forever. None of the injured was badly hurt, but the management of “Pinafore” would take no more chances with a spirit so unconventional. Stern repression was Young Ambition’s lot for the rest of that tour.

At the end of the season on the road the company moved to Urich’s Cave, a once famous concert hall of St. Louis, where *Sir Joseph* sang all summer and lived in a theatrical boarding-house with Miss Dow. With the coming of autumn there was a return to the circuit and the one-night stands. After a few months it was evident that the drawing powers of a children’s “Pinafore” troupe were done for, and “The Chimes of Normandy” was substituted, in which Fanny Brough appeared as *Suzanne*. All this time she had been without adequate vocal instruction and was, in fact, injuring her voice by forcing it and misusing it. Yet she seems to have sung well and reaped distinction. None of her press notices have been preserved, but there is recollection of newspapers that singled out *Sir Joseph* and *Suzanne* for particular praise. The “Chimes” not prospering, “The Little Duke” took its place, Fanny Brough playing one of the pages. “Girofle-Girofla” was under rehearsal when, on November 12, 1877, the en-

terprise collapsed and the company returned to Cincinnati.

Sarah Hodgson Frost, strict Wesleyan, amateur theologian, was never a good soul-mate for John Frost, now Brough, and under whatsoever name a consistent acolyte in the order of Saint Paul. After the removal to Cincinnati she felt that his pranks were too much to bear with, and left him. A few months later she sought a divorce.

"When I get it," she solemnly assured her children, "I will not marry the best man that ever stood in black shoe leather."

Loud applause greeted this sentiment. The children had no such happy recollections of their father as should make them long for another. But the lady did protest too much. Hardly a year passed before she was led to the altar by one Hess, a stalwart German in the baking way. Upon this development the children looked with unconcealed disgust. From the beginning they disliked their stepfather, and he reciprocated in kind. Being so much the elder and having had more experience, he knew how to make his hatred more effective. The utmost of their war power was to refuse to speak to him; he could drive them from the house and make them work. "These children must be earning something; they must find something to do," was the burden of his incessant plaint. The wife agreed with him—for sake of peace, no doubt. It was determined that Fanny must learn a trade. "You must learn to do something useful," said Mrs. Hess.

"A trade will enable you to support yourself." She had never wholly approved of those stage connections; necessarily, to the Wesleyan mind they must have some savor of the works of the devil.

Another former member of the "Children's 'Pinafore' Troupe," likewise cast on the windy side of fortune, had secured a place in a cracker factory and thought she could edge Miss Fanny into the same employment, which was packing crackers into boxes. But one day of this contribution to the nation's industrial wealth was sufficient for Fanny. An odor of ginger snaps pervaded the place; it made her ill. The pathology seems insufficient, but there were more things than ginger snaps to affect this young woman. In thinking and purpose she was already launched upon the theater. What had the packing of crackers to do with these sublime employments?

Mrs. Hess, being still strong for something useful and her husband insistent upon it, the next adventure was to a school of telegraphy where three months were required to prove to all concerned that Fanny Brough's way of life led not to the telegraph key.

"Girls that entered the school after me," she says, "soon outstripped me. It was not a thing to which I was used—to be outstripped by any one. I found I did not care for it. The truth is, I was all that time living somewhere else. My fingers might be tapping a telegraph key; my mind was busy with a play I had seen or wanted to see. One trouble was, I had tasted the joy of expression. I couldn't have



diagnosed my case then, nor named it, but that was the reason I was so discontented. *Sir Joseph Porter*, if you think of it as art, is nothing to stir enthusiasm, but it had, after all, a kind of significance. Lighter than a feather and a kind of singing cartoon, it was still something to be portrayed, and I had been portraying it. You can see the distance between that joy and a telegraph key. Telegraphy is useful and worthy and necessary, but seems to lack appeal to a girl with a head full of Charlotte Cushman."

One more attempt was made to win her from the way she had picked for herself. She was entered as a pupil of dress designing. Except as to one respect, that, too, was all futile. To see how stage costumes were imagined, plotted, and put together had a certain interest. Sitting in front of the stage she had often wondered how those gorgeous things were evolved. Now she was glad of a chance to see the inside of the mystery.

For being now rated as a professional person, in right of her stage experiences, she had some privilege of free entrance to the theaters, and used it with diligence and judgment. She saw all the noted actors and actresses of that day as they came to Cincinnati; she observed their work with care and a spirit beyond her years discerning. She saw Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Mary Anderson, Fanny Davenport, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, and others of less fame, sometimes from a seat in the house, sometimes from the stage; for she was



often engaged as a supernumerary—at fifty cents a night. As she was known to have had training and some skill, the managers were glad to have her on their lists when they had choruses to swell or crowds to march around, glad to have one that could walk about the stage without falling over her own feet. Thus she appeared among the populace or otherwise throughout Lawrence Barrett's engagement in Cincinnati and again with Lotta and with McCullough. Between times she stood in the wings and watched. One of her gifts from fortune was an almost infallible memory. She was enriching it now with treasures of information. All the machinery of the stage revolved before her. She saw the method of each actor, and before long, as she passed these scenes in silent review, she began to wonder if there might not be other and better ways.

Colonel Miles continued to manage the foremost theater of Cincinnati, and his sister-in-law, Miss Dow, to keep her generous interest in her little protégée of "Pinafore" days. Fanny Brough was often at the Miles' home. Miss Dow, excellent actress, having both intelligence and character, had played in the legitimate drama in this country and in England. One of Colonel Miles's ventures for the season of 1882-1883 (Fanny Brough being then aged sixteen years) was a tour of the country by Robert McWade, playing "Rip Van Winkle." Not the "Rip Van Winkle" that Boucicault made for Jefferson, and Jefferson made immortal, but another version of the story, more melodramatic and obvious.

In the McWade company Miss Dow and Colonel Miles secured places for Fanny Brough and her younger sister Annie. They were to perform on the stage the parts of *Rip's* children, *Heinie* the boy and *Steenie* the girl. *Heinie*, the more important rôle, fell to the hands of Fanny. For these services each was to receive \$7 a week and traveling expenses.

Mr. McWade was a good actor; his *Rip Van Winkle* was virile and well-considered. But the public, after its common habit, was slow to admit a rival to its favorite. Long ago it had taken Mr. Jefferson to its heart and could find no room there for another. Many other good actors and deserving productions have gone to wreck on this same promontory of unreason. The receipts of the McWade company were but mediocre. For a time salaries were paid regularly, and little Miss Brough, having an eye single to her goal, practised thrift upon her slender income. Out of her \$7 a week she had with self-denial managed to save \$25, a fact that she contemplated at times with awe and pride. Then came weeks of still harder fortune for the company, and instead of her \$7 she received each week the I.O.U. of the manager, a document the hopeful thought might some day be redeemable in coin. Then came the dismal announcement that the tour must end, but all the players would be provided with railroad fare to their homes. On the last night of "Rip," Fanny Brough went upon the stage leaving her hard-earned and desperately-saved little fortune—\$25 and the collection of manager's autographs—

in her purse in the dressing-room. When she returned the purse had vanished. The next day she arrived in Cincinnati without money to pay her street-car fare to her mother's house.

The rest of that season she spent at home, but she was not idle. The Strongs and idleness are oil and water. Some months before a book agent had called at the little hotel with two bargain offers: a Family Bible and the works of Shakespeare, to be had on the instalment plan, and by his account, wondrously cheap. Mrs. Hess succumbed at once about the Bible. She had at the time, not more than seven copies in the house and felt the need of more.

"Get the Shakespeare, too," said Fanny. Mrs. Hess hesitated. It would cost twenty-five cents a week, and native frugality rose in her breast against the extravagance.

"I will earn the money myself," said Fanny, and on this basis the contract was signed on the spot. Dressmaking, telegraphy, and cracker packing having failed, the bold purchaser was without income at the moment, but was not assailed by that recollection. The fifty-cent pieces she received for impersonating one of the populace of Rome or a page at the royal court of Denmark she divided loyally with the publishing house until the book was paid for—Shakespeare paying for Shakespeare.

After the collapse of the McWade company she took up the volume and began a daily and systematic study of the plays. The copy is still extant and intimately marked and scribbled over with her

comments in a sprawling, girlish hand. I am aware that this and other incidents are out of all keeping with her years, but it is true, as she herself has observed, that she had almost no childhood. In her mind she was now as mature as a woman of twenty-five—grave, a little reticent, somewhat introspective, and much taken up with this notion of a career with prizes worth winning; a career, always a career. Shakespeare, when she came now to study him, to dwell upon him, to follow his plots with imaginary pictures of how the scenes would look on the stage, took possession of her. All the stories she had ever read seemed inferior to these. They reached out to seize the imagination; they had to do with living creatures of flesh and blood, actualities of human existence. She studied all the plays, she studied the sonnets; she felt that when she opened that book she was in touch with a mind different from any other mind she had ever encountered. Emerson said that he felt always a peculiar satisfaction in meeting persons that really perceived the immense superiority of Shakespeare, and I think it is indeed a kind of password to a certain confraternity. He would have found in this young woman a pupil to his fancy. Now when she had seen Barrett or McCullough in one of these plays it was her custom to take up the book, go over each scene, recall the speeches as she had heard them, recall the emphases, and try to fit them into her own understanding of the lines.

It was an occupation that greatly pleased her; her thought turned naturally to analysis. She had

learned much from her previous experiences and observations on the stage, child as she was. There now began to piece themselves together in her mind, conclusions about the actor and his work that were vague then but helped to form what might be called her artistic character of after years. It seemed to her, even then, that some of the usages of the stage must be wrong; at least, they failed to agree with what she had felt rather than thought must be the object of acting. She gathered from what she heard and saw among actors that separate details called "points" were highly esteemed. She heard much arguing about the way one actor did the Curse Scene in "*Richelieu*," how another did the Queen Mab speech in "*Romeo and Juliet*," how one actress did the Potion Scene and another pictured *Ophelia* mad, and about the relative amount of applause each received. Actors seemed to be racing for records in rounds of hand-clapping. She felt that this jarred with impressions she had received from her Shakespeare. He had left certain characters to be made living with voice and action. This could have nothing to do with "points"; "points" could only mar the portrait-making, they could never add anything to it; a living *Juliet* and "points" —impossible!

She was a diligent reader of dramatic criticism in the newspapers, and it seemed to her after a time that the critics were as far out of the way. Much of their writing was taken up with the comparing of one actor with another in the same scenes;



little or nothing was said of the actor's work in interpreting the author's thought. "Points" and "climaxes" she had noticed were usually achieved by loud noise. She went home, looked in the book, and could find nothing there to indicate loud noise.

Next she began to notice that certain actors uttered certain lines in such a way that the meanings in their mouths and the meanings as she had found them hardly seemed to be on speaking terms. One night she was at the theater and heard *Juliet* say:

My only love *sprung* from my only hate.

She had read enough in Shakespeare to imbibe the spirit of his antitheses, although she would hardly have known what that word meant, and she felt in a fairly chaotic way that the line so sounded did not sound right. Not long afterward a much-lauded *Portia* came to town and assailed Fanny Brough's ears with this:

The *quality* of mercy is not strain'd.

"The *quality* of mercy?" she repeated to herself, when she was at home and pottering over the book. But that line was an answer, swift and straight, to *Shylock's* question:

On what compulsion must I?

and quality had nothing to do with that question. Common sense showed that the counter stroke to "*compulsion*" was necessarily "*not strained*."

This simple revelation opened up a world of won-



dering about other such manglings and maimings. The farther she went the more astonished she became. She sat at a play fresh from her own hard reading and memorizing and was dismayed to find almost every line uttered in a way that reversed the notion of it she had taken up from the book. One night she went to a celebrated performance of "Othello" and heard two renowned players do this:

*Iago.* My lord, you know I love you.

*Othello.* I *think* thou dost,

and she saw at once that this upset the plan of the whole scene. Because if *Othello* so plainly distrusted *Iago* it was absurd to show him next giving belief to the man he distrusted—and belief about a matter dearer to him than his life. And she saw next that it was preposterous to have *Othello* say in one line that he distrusted *Iago* and say in the next:

And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty.

She began to suspect that these actors not only chose the wrong words to emphasize but emphasized them wrongly. She remembered that the same night she had heard *Iago* say to *Brabantio*:

'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the devil bid you,

with such an inflection on "devil" that the line was made to mean *Brabantio*, in a state of utter depravity, would not serve God, nay, not if the devil himself should bid him. Whereas it seemed to her that

in reality *Iago* means *Brabantio* is so fearful of the devil he will not even serve God at the devil's incitement.

Afterward, when she came to learn more about inflections she saw that by a simple change in one note in the sounding of this word the entire meaning could be reversed. Nothing else could have been better for her to know at that point on her road.

It was the historic period of the Great American *Juliet*; a statement that may require explanation, though not to those that well remember theatrical conditions from 1880 to 1890. The rapid and rather spectacular success of Mary Anderson had fired the imagination of many a schoolgirl to dreams of a like brilliant rise. Particularly maidens in the Middle West seemed to be exposed to these seizures; perhaps because Miss Anderson had emerged from Kentucky. A crabbed and disgusted New York critic growled that 40,000 American girls were doing the Balcony Scene that ought to be doing the family dishes. It was a poor high school in those days that could not produce at least one young lady able to slaughter Shakespeare after the most approved manner of pains-taking and pains-giving elocution and so qualify for a career of glory. In 1883 Cincinnati's favorite candidate for stage honors was Miss Josephine Reilly, of whose future local pride had long prophesied greatness. I think it was her wealthy stepfather that with current cash backed her rather expensive preparations to make these predictions come true. Colonel Miles was her man-

ager; a company was gathered to support her on a tour through the land, Miss Dow was chosen for a place in it, and she secured another for Fanny Brough to play juveniles.

She was now eighteen years old, of medium height, slender and frail of aspect, with a pale and rather sallow face, great, dark, and wistful eyes, a head that seemed too big for her body, beautiful, dark-brown hair in bushy ringlets, and a manner off the stage singularly shy and even diffident. The odd thing was that on the stage she was all the other way; when she stepped from the wings she was all at her ease, sure of herself, with some showing of native grace and intelligence. Miss Reilly was to make her leap to fame in "Romeo and Juliet," "The Hunchback," "Twelfth Night," and "Pygmalion and Galatea." Fanny Brough was engaged to play *Balthazar* in "Romeo and Juliet," *Maria* in "Twelfth Night," and *Myrene* in "Pygmalion and Galatea." In "The Hunchback" the part of *Master Stephen* was made over into a juvenile to fit her, and botched in the making.

Frederick Paulding, a young man of means that had tried unsuccessfully to be a Shakespearean star, was the leading man. Miss Dow played strong parts like the *Countess Olivia*.

The company made a brave start and visited most of the towns on the one-night circuit of the Middle West. Varying fortunes attended it, mostly bad; but at least the funds held out and salaries were paid. *Balthazar* in "Romeo and Juliet" is hardly

a part in which genius itself could pluck down coronals; no more is *Master Stephen* or *Myrene* in "Pygmalion and Galatea." It was as *Maria* in "Twelfth Night" that Fanny Brough had her only chance at distinction, and first and last she seems to have made the most of it. From her initial line to her final exit, after the comical scene with *Malvolio* and the forged letter, she had the chief attention of the house whenever she was before it. Criticism at that time could hardly be called a feature of mid-western journalism, being written between the market report and the list of prominent hotel arrivals and by the same hand. Yet it was to be noted that in town after town the newspaper account of the doings of the Reilly company singled out Miss Brough as conferring whatever sparkle the performance owned.

In those days Maggie Mitchell was the idol of that part of the populace but lately, and incompletely, emancipated from Puritan convictions about the devil and the theater. "Fanchon the Cricket" and "The Pearl of Savoy" were annual events in many western and southern towns that looked askance at the rest of the season's theatrical offerings. When one southern journalist predicted that in time Miss Fanny Brough would come almost to rival Maggie Mitchell, he felt, no doubt, that he was bestowing a diadem worth while. Now and then a writer more discerning found in the performance of *Maria* a new note, a note of sincerity and consideration, and when such a recognition fell under the eye of the

young actress she felt that in face of so many obstacles she must still be upon the right track or near it.

Miss Reilly's ambitious aim did not carry far. One season demonstrated that the public was hopelessly blind to her merits, and with practical wisdom, no doubt, the purse-strings were drawn against her. The tour came to an end in the spring of 1884. But before it had ceased from among the affairs of men a new and wonderful prospect had opened before the eyes of Fanny Brough.

Partly by accident, as you shall see. Miss Ada Dow had long made judicious observation of the young woman's work and character, and had drawn favorable conclusions about her. They stayed at the same hotels and went to and from the theater together. One night, after a performance of "Romeo and Juliet," when they were walking hotelward, little Miss Brough was silent most of the way. At last she piped up, and to this effect:

"I stood in the wings to-night watching Miss Reilly in the Potion Scene, and I don't think that is the way to play it nor anything like the way."

"Oh, you don't?" said Miss Dow, vastly amused. "And how do you think it ought to be played?"

"Well, in the first place, I don't think the scene should be set that way. So long as *Juliet* stands in that position the audience has no fair chance to see her face. Now it seems to me that the face in that scene has much to tell that shouldn't be lost. In the next place, it seems to me there should be less fuss.

Too much vehemence and elocution spoil the real sense of the scene. *Juliet* has been developed in the play from a child to a woman. If she had enough strength of character to talk of suicide to *The Friar*, she had enough to take the potion without screaming. She has great emotions in that scene, but they can't be shown by elocution. Besides, it seems to me Miss Reilly didn't read the lines right. She made the wrong words stand out. I don't think you can get the meaning that way. It seems to me that some of these lines, if they aren't said right, have no meaning at all," and she gave illustrations.

"This is the girl for me," Miss Dow might have said to herself. More conversations approved all her favorable impressions. Soon afterward she proposed to take Fanny Brough in charge, support her, supervise her training until she should be fitted for great achievements as a star actress, and then have share in her earnings when those achievements should come to pass. It was an arrangement founded partly upon sentiment, since Fanny Brough had long been a protégée of Miss Dow's, but also upon some sound considerations of business. It was evident that this slender young thing had gifts of the first order, but latent and to be developed by study. Some day she would be the wonder and admiration of the public that would come to lay at her feet tribute of current value, and who could have better right to share in it than her guide, monitor, and friend? In effect she adopted little Miss Brough, relieving Mrs. Hess of all responsi-



bility for her and becoming her "Aunt Ada." In August of that year guardian and ward started for New York, where the tuition was to begin, and so far as the stage was concerned that was the end of Fanny Brough.

## CHAPTER III

### A COMBAT WITH HERSELF



UNT ADA had much faith but slender means. She rented a small, inexpensive apartment in West Thirty-sixth Street, near Broadway, and launched her pupil upon the paths of learning. These were not primrose certainly; it may be doubted if at the conservatoire itself any pupil ever went through a more rigorous course of training. The neophyte had chosen to prepare herself first in "Ingomar," "The Lady of Lyons," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Hunchback," "Twelfth Night," and "Pygmalion and Galatea." So far as merely learning the lines of *Parthenia*, *Juliet*, *Julia*, *Viola* and *Galatea* were concerned, she had nothing to do, for these she already had at the tip of her tongue, letter perfect; but what she had in hand went far beyond memorizing. Every morning she arose at eight o'clock, took a light and hasty breakfast and, if the weather were at all tolerable, walked steadily until noon, most often in Central Park. Not for exercise or amusement; exercise was provided elsewhere on her program, and she and amusements were strangers. What she sought was to be alone and so to study.

She had no need to carry a book in her hand; the books she studied were already in her head. Her method was to repeat to herself her part with all its cues, and then go over it line by line as she would say it on the stage, turning it to and fro, weighing the words, auscultating their very hearts for bits of meaning she might have overlooked. The imagination she had expended upon the making of romances she turned to account by picturing before her the stage as she thought it should be set for each scene, with the position and posture of each actor.

This practise had another result.

As she founded these picturings on the book and not on what she had seen, she accumulated a store of grievances against tradition.

Of these I will cite here one instance. When *Viola* comes upon the stage in "Twelfth Night" she begins thus:

*Viola.* What country, friend, is this?

*Captain.* This is Illyria, lady.

*Viola.* And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother, he is in Elysium.

It was usual in those days to play this to a somewhat lively tempo and for *Viola* to show to the world a face of youthful curiosity. The practice seemed to this student unwarranted. She noted in the succeeding lines *Viola's* anxious questioning whether *Sebastian* might not have escaped the shipwreck; she noted *Viola's* deep affection for her twin brother. In the first words she spoke, then, the true

*Viola* struck an undertone of melancholy. The more she studied and considered, the clearer this became. She saw that even in *Viola's* lightest moments there was always a delicate suggestion of a somber background; even in her forced theatrics, even in the dénouement, even when she won her love, there was always a gentle and pensive sadness lurking in her speech. She had often seen the play done as if it were all of a piece and nothing but mirth. It occurred to her that she had not thus known Shakespeare when she was studying him in her mother's attic. The comedy of *Sir Toby* and *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* was funny enough without making every other person in the drama contribute only to laughter.

She had a feeling that Shakespeare habitually exhibited his characters against a screen or rear drop; that *Viola* was far more than a lovesick girl in a bit of pretty poetic comedy; that the mirth of the others was contrasted with a picture of idyllic and gentlest womanhood, a creature of ethereal loveliness in word and act. She found in the lines, as she said them over and over, more than she had ever known to be expressed on the stage. She thought that to try to bring out this hidden feeling and make it live, might be a better work than to seek applause for a *Viola* more trippingly done along the traditional lines.

That unusual, hard-gripping memory of hers actresses had said certain lines when she, as a super-enabled her to recall how different actors and

numenary, had stood in the wings to watch them. She had to repeat the same lines now as she pursued her way around and around Central Park, and some of them seemed to stick in her throat if she tried to say them after venerated fashion. Studying *Juliet*, she recalled one esteemed bungler that in her hearing had said:

Go, counsellor;  
Thou and my bosom *henceforth* shall be twain.

Distrust (or disgust) grew upon her the more she contemplated these excursions into hodgepodge, and as skepticism waxed she turned it to practical account in her own labors. These things being wrong, wherein lay right? She found that if she really mined after the meaning of a line until she got it and was sure of it, there was no difficulty about trapping this elusive right. All she had noticed, or had fancied she noticed, about voice tones when she was thinking of that line of *Iago's* to *Brabantio* had its good uses now. She practised on these tones and was always more surprised to see how much variety and power of meaning there was in them. It seemed to her that this must be the actor's real business—to study out meanings, saturate himself in them, be sure of them, and then transmit them to others lighted up with action, made alive to the eye, most of all made alive to the mind through the ear. She had a notion that it was because the thoughts of the dramatists were translatable into feelings, where they did not automatically so translate them-

selves, that the actor had a craft. He was to carry that feeling to his audience.

Years after when she came to read Tolstoi's "What Is Art?" she laughed to see how well the vague, youthful intuitions and impressions she had picked up from her reading of Shakespeare fitted into the philosophy of the Russian. It appeared that she must have tried to put his doctrine into practise before she had more than heard the mention of his name.

There is not a path in Central Park she has not worn, turning these things to and fro, or making her silent recitations. Largely unschooled as she was, her labors bestowed upon her two attainments of wisdom that probably no university training could have supplied to her.

First, she learned the secrets of concentration; she learned how to settle her mind on one thing and exclude all the rest. To this, it is to be supposed, her loneliness and aloofness helped; for although she had an unusual capacity for the noblest kind of friendship, she was without a friend and almost without an acquaintance. She was her own inexorable taskmistress; she conceded to herself no amusements, no holidays and no relaxations. The spirit of her Roundhead ancestors must have been upon her; you can imagine a Strong in Oliver's army going through his devotions and his drill in the same spirit.

The other advantage was like to this and lay in a mastery of her own spirit. Even a Roundhead



was a bundle of complexities and contradictions, like the rest of us. With all her strength of resolution she was sensitive, at first diffident, and assailed at times with black glooms and doubts. Much of this was nerves; she was thin, sallow, overzealous, and was overworking her physical stamina. Many a night in the Thirty-sixth Street flat, after a day spent in vain endeavor to get a line or a scene the way she wished it, or after some experience with rudeness or unkindness, she cried herself to sleep. At times the blue demons tried to whisper in her ear that the attempt was hopeless and she had better go back to the boarding-house.

All this was in the first few months of her life in New York. Of a sudden, one day, she awoke to the fact that it would not do, that she must begin the fight then and there with her own soul. She summoned all her latent reserves of self-control to face down every doubt, to steel herself against the suggestions of weariness and to put on mental armor against the uncivil. And she did all these things. She developed in herself such perfect tactics of defense that whenever any hard situation said, "You can't!" the soul within her shouted back, "I will!" and when she was beset with recollections of somebody's rudeness, she drowned them all with reiterations of "I don't care!" The simple device won, as it has won for others; she found after a time that in truth she did not care. She had no doubt, and gaining in strength of body as of mind, went upon her rigid program with confidence, and almost joy.

The joy part of it seems strange. In years she was no more than a girl, but having conquered herself, was settled down into a grim and hand-to-hand struggle with fate on terms that might have daunted one of more experience, as surely they would have overwhelmed one of weaker will. A life without relaxation at the age of nineteen—it seems not in nature. But we are to remember that for years she had been accustomed to independent thinking, to action upon her own initiative and to the counsels of a mind that seemed much older than her body. Beyond even this there was the spur of her ambition. She had covenanted with herself for greatness; she would not allow any weakness to interfere with that bargain.

Thus her mornings were spent. If rain or snow kept her from the Park, she worked in her room until half past twelve. After luncheon she practised before Miss Dow the lesson she had studied alone. Miss Dow, a skilful, wise, enlightened teacher, herself of the studious habit, sat in a corner, held the book and made comments, while the pupil rehearsed the scenes as she had conceived them—rehearsed them on an imaginary stage. As an example, once in "The Hunchback" Miss Dow drew her attention to the way the student managed a laugh.

"I think it does not sound quite natural," she said. "Try it again."

The next attempt was no better, nor the next. "Try it again," said Miss Dow. Still it failed to hit

the center mark of perfection. The student felt somewhat cast down.

"I wish you would show me how to do it," she said.

"I will not," said Miss Dow. "If I did, you would be merely imitating and not acting. I want you to find it out for yourself. Now, what do you think the passage means? How do you understand it?"

The young woman responded that she understood it to mean thus and so.

"Then express that," said Miss Dow. "Speak the lines so as to bring out that meaning and accompany them with the action that seems to you best fitted to enforce it."

The afternoon rehearsals usually consumed three or four hours. No account was made of the fact that the play had already been rehearsed many times. What of it? An actor could not know too much of his work. After the rehearsal came, if she were not too tired, a period of physical exercise, a rest and dinner. But often the rehearsal had been so exacting that she must go to bed at once. She knew she was physically far from strong; but in her astute observation about this actor's art she had seen that a supple frame and an upright carriage were great assets, and when she had rested she was usually up again to seek them. After the mind, the body. She thought the fencing foil was the thing. She would fix a target upon the wall, stand at a line upon the floor, and lunge at the mark,

first with her right hand and then with her left. This, she believed, exercised every muscle in the body without danger of overfatigue, of overdevelopment, or of straining.

The chief books in this academy, aside from the play text and works about Shakespeare, were an encyclopedia and a *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. To get the exact historical atmosphere of each play was held as important as to know the lines. For example, she hunted out all that has been ascertained and much that has been imagined about Verona, the Capulets and Montagues, and came upon some items that much modified her conception of *Juliet*. She read about Illyria and was not dismayed to find that *Sir Toby Belch* was hardly a Dalmatian name, because she knew that Shakespeare was not concerned about geography but about fundamental principles of human conduct. She dug out the history of the Allemanian invasion of Southern France, the Greek colony of Massilia and the rest, and saw that Halm's story of Parthenia was not at all impossible.

The dictionary had another usage. Besides wrong emphasis, Fanny Brough had noticed that stage practise was lax about pronunciation. She had stood in the wings and heard the same word in the same play pronounced three ways, a thing that jarred upon her nice sense of artistic congruity. Besides, she came of the Cumberlanders, a people noted for clean-cut and precise enunciation, and there must have been something native about her horror of

slovenly speech. Hence to the *Unabridged*, which settled the pronunciation of every disputable word; whereupon the folds of her memory wrapped it around forever. Once, in rehearsing, she came to the word "Caucasian."

"Co-cash-ian," she called it.

"Co-kay-sian," corrected Miss Dow.

"Co-cash-ian," said the pupil again.

"Dreadful!" said Miss Dow. "Please try to be more careful. Say 'Co-kay-sian.'"

"Excuse me," said the novice. "It's Co-cash-ian."

"Oh, no!" said the instructress. "C-a-u-c-a— by all the usual rules of orthoepy that must be Co-kay-sian."

Placid Miss Brough produced her beloved *Unabridged*, which she had long before consulted, and thumbed out the word. The preferred pronunciation given was "Co-cash-ian."

The one exception to the round of labor was an occasional visit with Miss Dow to the theater. On such an occasion she saw Clara Morris in "Denise" and was taken captive.

"I thought she had a wonderful method in emotional scenes," she said when lately she was recalling those years. "She was a revelation in the difficult art of knowing exactly how far one can let oneself go in portraying emotion. I sat in a box that night and was so bewitched by the art practised before me that I forgot where I was. I slipped to my knees; hung over the edge of the box with my arms extended, intent upon every word and movement.

I was carried away with the sufferings of *Denise*. They seemed so real to me that all that night and for some time afterward I felt that *Denise* was an actuality and I had suffered with her.

"It was a rare experience. I suppose one would find it hard now to believe how monotonous a life I led. I seemed to have accepted it without revolt. Perhaps it was of a piece with what I had been used to. All the recollections of my youth have to do in some way with privations and hard work—mostly hard work."

Of the many wise and kind services performed for her by Miss Dow, one that had inestimable and far-reaching results was almost accidental. Both had felt that the student's voice was not what it should be: straining to sing *Sir Joseph* and the rest had brought about a condition in which there was virtually no middle register. She had only high notes and low notes—and chiefly the high. In Fourteenth Street near University Place was an instructor in vocal music named Parsons Price, a Welshman, an old-time singer in the *Eisteddfod*, and in his own way a genius. Miss Dow learned of his work and carried her young pupil before him.

He wanted her to sing, and sore was the face of dismay that he pulled when he heard her.

"I don't know whether we can do anything with that or not," he said. "We have to make a middle register, and I don't know whether it is possible. But we can tell in three months if you are willing to practise faithfully as long as that. But why do you





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*Parthenia*  
("Ingomar")



breathe that way, child? No one can sing or speak or act that breathes as you breathe."

He took a diagram and explained the physiology of voice dynamics, the bellows-like function of the diaphragm, and the way sound is produced by currents of air passed over the vocal cords.

"Up to that time," she said afterward, "I had never given a thought to breathing. I knew in a vague way that something must be wrong, because in long passages I often felt my breath was failing me, and I could not make the sounds I wished to make. From the time Mr. Price unfolded the simple secret to me I had no more trouble. Nothing else is so important for the beginner to learn. He taught me to breathe entirely from below, to fill the chest by depressing the diaphragm and then to use the chest as a reservoir, allowing enough air to escape to make the needed sound, always replenishing the supply by using the diaphragm and expelling the air from below instead of contracting the chest or throat muscles above. General instruction about this would be a measureless boon to civilization. It would help to mitigate the high, piercing voice that is so painfully common among us women. I found afterward that by using the method Mr. Price taught me I could, without a visible effort, cause my voice to fill the largest auditorium."

Mr. Price drilled her diligently. His practise was to strike on a piano keyboard the notes he wished her to produce and at which she must try until she made them. Three afternoons in the week

she interrupted her rehearsals long enough to take his instruction; daily she practised at home according to his precepts. At the end of three months he gave her the good news that he was satisfied the missing notes would be supplied, but for months thereafter she never relented in vocal work. It was hardly work, either, because as soon as she saw the possibilities of scientific voice culture she liked it. Here was a good diversion from daily routine; she became interested in growing a voice as one might be interested in growing roses. As for Teacher Price, he often testified that this was his star pupil. Years afterward singers, débutantes and others came to him and asked for a voice like hers.

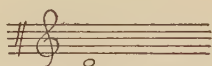
"God made that voice," was his pious response.

He was more picturesque than technical. His favorite pupil came to him with the beginnings of a great vocal equipment, but no more than the beginnings, and but for his instruction might never have come near the fame she afterward enjoyed for the most beautiful voice on the stage.

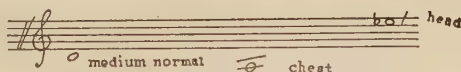
"Vocal velvet," the critics liked to call it. In fact, it was an extraordinary organ. Its overtone was a full, rich and faultless contralto with a mezzo range, but its undertones were of an amazing variety and exquisite, smooth liquidity, without the crossing of one breathy flaw, so that they sometimes sounded not so much like the tones of one speaking as some new and perfect musical instrument discoursing melody at once and conveying thought.

When it was finally adjusted to itself, if I may

use the phrase, its normal pitch for all ordinary purposes was at D natural, thus:



Its ordinary range was from B to E flat, which may be shown thus:



In a few years it developed, and developed fully, a striking peculiarity. It had for the vowel sounds, even A and I, as much resonance as for M and N. This seems incredible but is quite true. It was an affluence that meant an immeasurable advantage and provided an always round and mellow note for even the sharpest vowellic syllable. "Indeed a gift of the gods, and rare at that," you will say. It was not. She had nothing of this when she began. It was a gift of her own hard work and tireless effort.

After a year and a half of unremitting labor at the Thirty-sixth Street flat, Miss Dow moved to Bayonne, New Jersey, where rents were less and the surroundings quieter. The beautiful dales of Central Park must be given up for the hard angles and unkempt streets of an unlucky suburb. No other change occurred in the life of the student. Some idea of her severity with herself may be gained from the rule she made that she would read fifty times

every play she was preparing to act in. I mean, to take no fewer than fifty times the book in hand and read to herself and carefully all the play from the first word to the last. One might say she had no need, for she had long been so familiar with it she could recite it backward; but her notion was that by patiently reading and rereading, she might waylay something new about meanings.

This, and her fixed resolution to pay no heed to precedent, are the best showings of her mental traits. How much of strength of will and character was required to discard tradition, only actors can fully know. Most of our acting in standard plays is accretionary. This bit of business is inherited from Garrick, that from Betterton. Macready used to do this in *Hamlet*; most *Hamlets* since him have reverently done the same thing. To change would be deemed sacrilegious. "Besides, Macready was a great actor," says the modern. "If he did this it must be the best thing to do and saves me bother." Hence it is repeated, although it may not be good at all, but very bad. And again, that monster, Custom, slips in and leads us to another thickety growth in the void that should be filled with a conservatoire. Most star actors have in their youth played in the company supporting older and more famous men, and have naturally and unconsciously adopted their tricks.

Not only movements, gestures, accents, emphases, and attitudes have thus become imbedded in the actor's practise, but words and lines have been added



to the text, and so firmly that they are regarded as veritable. In "Romeo and Juliet," Act III, Scene I, *Mercutio's* death scene, the acting versions always have this:

*Romeo, thou wert wont to call me a merry fellow—ask for me to-morrow and thou shalt find me a grave man.*

The words italicized here are not in any text and, though diligently aided, I have been unable to find who added them. Some actor found that his audience, less nimble of wit than the Elizabethans, missed altogether the word-play of "grave man," and so put in the other line as first aid to otiose intelligence, and there it is, I suppose never to be canceled.

Musty accumulations made no hit with this young woman. What some one else had done or how some one else had done it seemed to her nothing for the adult mind to bother about. All her brooding was upon how she herself was to do it. She took nothing from the wrinkled hand of tradition, not a reading, not an emphasis, not a gesture. This is true, however strange it may seem in one so young; true, and in keeping with her instincts, which, all orderly on one side were of the rebel on another. Preston Pans renascent. If what she decided to do was ever like the thing some one else had done, the likeness was chance and not her will. She had seen many plays and many players, and some were good and some were bad. She felt she knew which were good, which were bad, and why; and now she steered accordingly.

This singularly original and powerful intellect, was not, in still other respects, geared to run grooves or compass but the one art. She liked all the arts; she liked to learn anything worth knowing. She had ideas about life; even when she was toiling away in Thirty-sixth Street or Bayonne, she liked to hear about the broad activities of mankind. She had no conception of a world bounded by the walls of a theater, and I may mention as a final indication of mind and capacity that while her actual schooling stopped with the seventh grade, she was educating herself by diligent and judicious reading, and of her own motion was mastering French and acquiring a working knowledge of German.

Meantime, there she is at Bayonne, laboring like one on a galley bench, having surrendered everything that youth regards as worth while or as its prerogative, and keeping her big eyes fixed always on the goal. Now twenty years old, and she never went to a social gathering of any kind, never danced, never had a girl chum or companion of her own age, never had any fun, never thought about it, and (to the female mind, the climax of all abnormality) never went on a shopping campaign. She made and turned her own dresses.

The few persons that saw her in those days and learned about her purpose were always doubtful whether her physique could bear the strain of the work she had chosen. To Miss Dow alone another question, equally awkward in its terms, was how, when the time should come, an unknown young

actress, striking out as a star in great rôles and standard plays, was to be financed. It appears that neither problem disturbed the person it centered about. She cannot recall now that she ever had a doubt that she would be physically strong enough to win through, or that the capital would be found when needed. Where it would come from, she had no guess, and so did not bother about it, but went her way up and down the back streets, doing the Balcony Scene to herself.

That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet,

said she. "Rose—, rose—rose—, if I can get the right tones on that word 'rose.' "

Another year went by. It was now the early spring of 1887. She had been at her task three years without cessation, and she felt, and Miss Dow agreed with her, that it was nearly done. She had fined and refined the parts she had chosen until they came near to appease, although they did not satisfy, her sense of what they should be. She could shut her eyes and pass before her every scene of "Ingomar," "The Hunchback," "Romeo and Juliet," as she had been doing them before her one auditor, and hoped to do them before theaters of people.

A device that helped her conclusions she had come upon by her own experimentings. Wishing to settle the relative positions and movements of the actors in each scene, she made herself a miniature theater with little figures, like toys, for the actors, and

moved them about while she recited the lines, until she found the best places and imagined the best action, which she entered on the margin of her play book; this being, so far as she could recall, the only time in her life that she had been able to play with dolls according to her own desires.

Her voice, too, was now well developed; even the exacting Price admitted its unusual resources and thought with Miss Dow that the time had come for the great venture. She could speak the longest passages without fatigue, without a break, and without the conscious effort of her vocal machinery.

"Can your voice carry?" said Genius Price and answered his own question.

"It can carry the whole house—and it will."

She had always foreseen that she must have for the stage another name than that she was christened by. Sarah Frances Frost—O tuneful Nine! How would that look upon a three-sheet poster? Imagine a young and unknown actress pleading for a hearing under such a banner! Imagine the chance for the facile jibe of the paragrapher if the audience happened to be small! Nothing could be so impossible, unless it were the name of Henry Brodribb, under which England's favorite actor son came into the world. Fanny Brough, or Frances Brough, would be little better. In the first place, there was no telling how the American tongue would mishandle it; already in her experience she had heard it called "Broff," "Brow" and "Bro." A name that few persons felt confident they could pronounce correctly

was no name for a popular actress. Besides, it neither looked, nor sounded, well, and she was like Gautier—a fair lover all her life of all things fair. At the time she happened to be deep in the study of the part of *Julia* in "The Hunchback," a part she always loved. Julia, then for the first name. She was by sympathy an Elizabethan and had learned to look with awe upon the genius and unfulfilled renown of Christopher Marlowe. She determined upon whatever tribute to him might lie in a revival of his name. Then again, she had a dainty taste in sound values, a gift fostered by her careful consideration of such musical marvels as Shakespeare's sonnets, and the "l" and "m" sounds in Julia Marlowe sang melodiously in her ear.

Thus equipped, she was ready to face the testing of the public opinion, and next an opportunity opened before her, more quickly than she had expected.

## CHAPTER IV

### CRUCIAL MOMENTS



COLONEL MILES had now come from Cincinnati to New York, where he was one of the managers of the Bijou Opera House, a small theater given over to burlesque. He was of a sanguine and jovial temperament, always of more vision than means and more hope than practise. It was he that originated and carried out the once famous Cincinnati Dramatic Festivals, in which all the noted star actors of the country came together to play Shakespeare, with great leading men like Louis James and Otis Skinner playing even the smallest parts; occasions glorious in art and barren in profits. Miles had unlimited faith in Julia Marlowe but little money wherewith to make good his confidence. At last he felt that he could dare a modest venture to put to the test the abilities in which he believed. He engaged a supporting company and arranged a two-weeks tour—in the country.

Of course, it was all haphazard. There was neither time nor money to secure adequate acting support, and no attempt to prepare the public for the coming of a new actress. In these days of advertising's artful aid the thing seems too dreamy to be real. Unheralded, Julia Marlowe went forth



to challenge comparison in familiar and standard plays with actresses that were established favorites. The fates could hardly have turned up a fiercer ordeal. Who was to pay money to see her, and why? This simple question seems never to have entered the heads of the management. Or perhaps they did not care; perhaps all they desired was to see if the young woman really could act as they hoped she could. In that case they overlooked the possible disaster that might shatter her courage when she should look out upon a house of empty benches.

The leading man engaged in this chanceful way was William Beach, an excellent old actor. The others were in the main fairly bad. Some had never before played in what is called, in stage language, the legitimate; some would have been much more at home in vaudeville. Naturally, there was but the scantest time to prepare and drill the company. When this slight young person appeared at rehearsal and undertook to be her own stage manager and to tell old-timers how scenes should be handled some sniffing might reasonably have been expected. You probably know how actors are about such things; temperamental and sensitive, and all that. On the contrary, the people here were most kind and sympathetic. Mr. Beach put his long experience at the disposal of the young star and was helpful and wise of suggestion. The others were moved by her youth and good nature, for if she was insistent upon her ideas she seems to have tact in urging

them. Besides, the older players were taken with the novelty of one so young attempting such difficult parts and looked upon her as an infant phenomenon, a child wonder, and hence exempt from criticism. One thing that befell her was unexpected profit from what she had always regarded as lost motion. She was wholly dissatisfied with the costumes. So going back to the days when she was an unwilling apprentice to the dressmaker's art, she took the clothes apart and put them together as she thought they should be.

And as to the stage business, she had her way about that, however much of a child she might have been. Barring the hopeless crudities of inexperienced players that had been too little rehearsed, the piece was much after her fancy when they moved to their first momentous place of trying out, which was New London, Connecticut.

The play selected for the first night was "Ingo-mar." As all her hopes, ambitions and future, and all the worth of so many years of painful effort hung first upon this single cast, it was to be expected that she should be in a state of nerve-racking anxiety. The supporting company was of this expectation and recorded its astonishment to find the novice the coolest member of the troupe. Whether in the rather trying moments before the curtain went up or while the playing was on, or while waiting for her own cue, she was always unruffled. I once asked her about this unusual exhibition of nerve control and she said:

"I never was frightened before an audience, that night or at any other time. I have never known what is called stage fright, or any sensation of it, even on the first night of a difficult play. I think no actor or speaker that knows exactly what he wishes to do and how he will try to do it ever feels stage fright. If I were uncertain about my lines or my emphases or my stage business, I might be badly frightened; but I never attempted a part in public until I had settled in my mind every detail of every minute I should be on the stage and of every word I should say. For that reason, it never occurred to me to be afraid."

I asked her for her recollections of that first night at New London.

"Oh, it went just as I had expected it would go. Every syllable sounded on the stage exactly as it had sounded when I was practising at Miss Dow's."

Musicians will be reminded of the story about César Franck and his symphony. After years of labor and disappointments Papa had succeeded in having it performed—incidentally to the scorn of critics and the contempt of players and conductor. When he reached home that day the household rushed at him.

"How did it go? Oh, how did it go?"

Papa beamed his cherubic smile. "Oh, it sounded just as I thought it would sound," was his only comment.

Not enough people came to the New London Opera House, that night, to fill half the seats. In

those days entertainments were not many in New London. A certain element in the town, acting upon a principle, moved by local pride, having a plentiful lack of other diversion, or obedient to the traditional American readiness to try anything once, attended every play that was offered. None among these, until the posters went up, had ever so much as heard of the name of Julia Marlowe. There was no reason why one should have heard of her; no eulogies were supplied for quotation, no previous records to guide the local press. Such auditors as gathered that night showed in their attitude of frosty indifference how little they expected. The first scenes excited small remark, but when the young actress entered upon the emotional passages of her part, the good people of New London began to perceive that they had not been invited to a rehearsal but to a performance of extraordinary power and interest. The chill passed off, the temperature rapidly rose and before the last act the audience surrendered. She had won the heart of every person that listened to her voice and watched her methods.

Here is the first criticism of Julia Marlowe, actress, that ever appeared in a public print:

(From the *New London Day*, April 26, 1887.)

#### MISS MARLOWE MAKES A HIT IN "INGOMAR"

One of the most deserving dramatic entertainments of the season was given at the New London Opera House last evening by Miss Julia Marlowe, supported by William C. Beach and an accomplished company. "Ingomar" was the

play and it received remarkably intelligent treatment, the minor parts even being taken so acceptably as to win the applause of the house. Of Miss Marlowe, a certain future may be predicted from her *Parthenia* last night. It is an exacting part but the young artist need not fear comparison with her seniors in the same walk. Added to her remarkable histrionic abilities are charms of person which seem indispensable when happily combined. Mr. Beach gave unbounded satisfaction as *Ingomar*, receiving liberal applause from the appreciative audience. Miss Brooks and Miss Fitzgerald respectively the *Actea* and the *Theano* of the evening, are entitled to a full meed of praise. To-night, "The Lady of Lyons."

The other journal of local light and leading was not less captivated. "One of the best performances of the season," observed the *New London Telegraph*:

Those who expected to find a novice in the fair *débutante* were most agreeably and surprisingly disappointed. Miss Julia Marlowe is an actress, to the manner born, and judging from her performance last night, her career will not close till she has climbed to the diamond ridge of artistic fame. Miss Marlowe's *Parthenia* was a marvelously correct interpretation, and her classic beauty helped to make the character one of the most attractive and engaging we have ever seen upon any stage.

The diction of these tributes may be a trifle faulty and the exact nature of the diamond ridge of artistic fame may be unrevealed to the laity, but there is no doubt of the unusual gusto of appreciation that pierces the comment. "Ingomar" was followed



by "The Lady of Lyons." Few persons now remember this factitious piece, the merited extinction of which in recent years has tended much to elevate the stage; but all playwrights know it well as the example of a play constructed faultlessly according to rule and plumb-line, and mostly of slush. Yet it offers in the part of *Pauline* certain opportunities for work of a distinctive quality to an actress that will take the trouble to discern them.

If the comments of the local press the next day are an indication, Julia Marlowe must have taken this trouble. One journal said that she more than confirmed the favorable impression she had made on her first appearance. "She was everything that the character of *Pauline* demanded and never fell into the faults of exaggeration, so common to young artists." Another dwelt with delight upon her elocution and added the sage comment that over and above her other great advantages, "Miss Marlowe possesses the sacred fire without which her other gifts would be next to valueless."

From these provings the company moved upon other New England cities of the same order, Watertown, Hartford and Willimantic in Connecticut and Marlboro in Massachusetts, and so on. The financial returns were usually bad and sometimes ghastly. Miss Marlowe remembers well the audience that gathered at Natick, Massachusetts. It consisted of fewer than a dozen persons, and the total box-office receipts did not pay the hire of the boys that distributed the handbills. She was quite unper-





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*Pauline*  
("The Lady of Lyons")



turbed; *Parthenia* that night was as delightful and effective as if the house had been filled. She had some reason to be content. If the tour reaped no money, it approved by the record and by many testimonies, the beginning of the career she had dreamed.

The other members of the company were paid salaries in convertible coin of the nation, but the young star and Miss Dow, who went with her, had nothing but faith, their hotel bills, and their railroad fares. Little the star cared. She dwelt in the clouds. Her own estimate of herself she had abundantly vindicated, and to mortals here below is allowed no sweeter taste of heavenly joys. She and Miss Dow were so poor they could not afford to pay for laundry, and so did their washing in a hotel wash-bowl—directly under the printed notice that forbade such employment,

Nothing in advance had been said in New York about the venture, but the noise of it now began to echo around the metropolitan press. On May 15th the *Boston Globe* in a summary of the current theatrical news, contained this:

Manager R. J. Miles, of the Bijou Opera House, New York, has very quietly been giving a protégée of his a little experience on the New England circuit. Miss Julia Marlowe is the name of the young lady, who has created the best of an impression wherever she has appeared, and of whom Manager Miles expects a great deal. Miss Marlowe is no novice, having had some little experience on the stage, but as a star she is but two weeks old; yet she has more than justified

all expectations. She has invariably drawn large audiences, while several "calls" have been the rule each evening. It would seem that "Bob" Miles had drawn a prize. *Galatea*, *Parthenia*, and *Pauline* have been the characters Miss Marlowe has assumed.

Colonel Miles had this pasted in the inside of his hat and Miss Dow read it with demure content as showing that in picking stars she knew how. As to the star herself, she smiled grimly at the remark about the invariably crowded houses and said:

"And there was Natick!"

## CHAPTER V

### ONE AFTERNOON AT THE BIJOU



**T**HAT summer Julia Marlowe spent at Miss Dow's rented house in Bayonne. She had too much good sense and too much mental ballast to suppose that her days of laborious preparation were over. She went back to the old round of daily study, reciting to herself in the morning, rehearsing to Miss Dow in the afternoon. She said she had succeeded in expressing these rôles as far as she had conceived them, but better expressions were left in them. It was a trait of hers never to be satisfied with anything she did. Between her ideal and the performance there was always, to her mind, some hiatus to be filled.

In the meantime her mother in Cincinnati, learning about all this success, had undergone a conversion as to the uselessness of a play-actor's life. The little hotel had prospered under careful management; there was a surplus in the bank. It was agreed on all hands that the next needful step in this career was an appearance in New York. Miss Dow represented this to Mrs. Hess and Mrs. Hess wrote that she was willing to finance such an appearance to the extent of her little savings of \$1,300.

Henry Dixie was then in the midst of his long run in "Adonis" at the Bijou Opera House. It was not the most auspicious place in the world to launch a new star in a serious play, for it had been so long the home of burlesque that its atmosphere and all its suggestions were of the comic; but Colonel Miles was one of its managers and he was able to secure it without cost, for one performance only, the afternoon of October 19, 1887.

Here was a desperate hazard. On this chance of one appearance with a hastily scratched up and poorly trained company, Julia Marlowe was to offer herself to the critical judgment of New York, blasé, cynical and incredulous. As before her future swung upon the pivot of one event. If she failed, or if environment and poor support overwhelmed her, she was done for and need not stop to try to salvage anything from the wreck. The play chosen for this cruel testing out was "Ingomar." Any of the critics could have told her that it would not answer. It had been done to death, it was mere sloppy sentiment, it belonged to a bygone and artificial age. Miss Marlowe would have nothing else. She had made an exhaustive study of that despised piece of sentimental meter and thought she saw in it some things the grave and reverend signiors of the press had overlooked.

All these oracles, all the managers and most of the actors in town were invited to the trial. It was a weary and dispirited assembly. As to the critics, they were dead tired of this kind of thing and would



fain pass up any more of it. The time was overstocked with stage-struck girls half mad with the notion that they could imitate Mary Anderson. None of them could act; all of them were mere declaimers of the worst school of American elocution, affected, unintelligent and noisy. Again and again, we had been brought out to witness these saddening shows. Nothing could be more painful. There should be one united newspaper revolt against them; or if the newspapers were too flabby to resist, then let the city editor send the police reporter or one of the cubs to write of the melancholy occasion. Why should we be ever more the victims?

In this mood they drifted listlessly into the place and sat down. Equally were the managers bored. They had come to oblige Bob Miles. One manager should do favors for another, that was true; but was not this carrying things rather far? A minx that thought she could act! The backwoods were full of them; an annual crop, like weeds, withered and forgotten the next year. To a house in this disposition the curtain went up. The leaflet playbills gave this cast:

<i>Ingomar</i> .....	Mr. Frank Evans
<i>Alastor</i> .....	Mr. J. Brennan
<i>Myron</i> .....	Mr. Leslie Allen
<i>Timarch</i> .....	Mr. George Nash
<i>Polydore</i> .....	Mr. F. J. Currier
<i>Lychon</i> .....	Mr. B. Henderson
<i>Amyntas</i> .....	Mr. J. Damon
<i>Elphenore</i> .....	Mr. C. Williams

<i>Adrastus</i> .....	Mr. F. Walton
<i>Novio</i> .....	Mr. B. H. Pierce
<i>Trinobantes</i> .....	Mr. William Cummings
<i>Ambivar</i> .....	Mr. F. Wilson
<i>Samo</i> .....	Mr. L. Cotier
<i>Actea</i> .....	Miss Effie Wild
<i>Theano</i> .....	Miss Isabella Waldron
<i>Parthenia</i> .....	Miss Julia Marlowe

The first few moments revealed nothing except the promise of a rather unusual deficiency in the support. At last *Parthenia* entered and was received with a polite tinkling of hand claps, noticeably thin. She looked like a slip of a girl, foolishly undertaking something she was manifestly unable to do. The kind-hearted in the audience gazed upon her with pity. It seemed the refinement of cruelty to put such a load upon such slender, childish shoulders. There was about her something effective to move such sympathy; she seemed so innocent and so honest.

With the first line she uttered the lolling critics began to sit up straight and to listen. A few more lines and they were hanging with rapt attention on every word that fell from her lips. Here was something new. Poor old stuff the play was—"Ingomar"! Everybody hated "Ingomar"! And yet it was not so here, but seemed lightened up with charm and interest; even the oldest playgoer was eager to see how such a *Parthenia* would fare. At the end of the first act there was a sudden and spontaneous outburst of applause, and the managers and critics

looked curiously at one another, each wishing to know if his fellow had been touched and moved as he had been.

The second act deepened every favorable impression. The joy of listening to those old lines, read as this young woman read them,—oh, beyond belief! If once they had seemed turgid, new meanings glowed upon the most familiar passages when thus uttered. Every word came out full and clear and rounded, like one of Peg Woffington's brandy cherries, delivered in a voice like some kind of flute or smooth, mellow clarion, carrying perfectly to the remotest corner of the house. And yet she spoke without an effort, this girl, and strange to say, spoke never to the audience but always to the person on the stage she was supposed to address. The audience! Why, how will you account for this? Novice, beginner, first attempt, and all that, and she seemed to be utterly unconscious of pit and gallery but only aware that she was a maiden in a Greek colony, menaced by a horde of barbarians. Thus scene by scene her spell upon her audience grew. At the close of the second act come those threadbare old lines:

Two souls with but a single thought,  
Two hearts that beat as one.

*Parthenia* says thus and goes out. Then *Ingomar* is to stand and thoughtfully repeat:

Two souls with but a single thought,  
Two hearts that beat as one.

That afternoon he had no chance to speak. The instant *Parthenia* had said the words and started for the wings the audience surged toward her with thunderous applause that continued through recall after recall. Under existing conditions, it is likely that no débutante ever gained a greater acclamation. Its reality is attested by the singular fact that when at last quiet was restored many persons slipped out to the nearby florist shops and at the end of the next act the stage was covered with flowers. It is one of the traditions of the New York stage that these enthusiasts that afternoon swept bare of bloom all the florists' stocks in that neighborhood. Another is that after that second act nine managers then present sought out Colonel Miles to offer engagements to Julia Marlowe.

When the play was over, a crowd broke upon the stage to congratulate her. With it went Nym Crinkle (A. C. Wheeler), dean of the guild of critics, who had seen more first nights than any other writer in New York. He was deeply moved, which I may say, was not his wont. He went up to Julia and placing his hands upon her shoulders, looked into her face an instant and said:

"My child, do you think you are strong enough to stand all this?"

By six o'clock that evening the theatrical world of New York knew that an unusual event had taken place and inquiries multiplied as to who this young woman was and whence of a sudden she had descended. The opinion among the actors was that

she had come to New York from long training and experience on country circuits, for it was naturally impossible, as everybody knew, that a beginner should handle herself with all that expert certainty. The newspapers the next morning recorded and celebrated a notable triumph. Mr. Dithmar, the critic of the *Times*, wrote this:

Julia Marlowe: remember her name, for you will hear of her again.

Miss Marlowe had a trial *matinée* yesterday at the Bijou Opera House, the last place in the world one would think of going to in search of an actress for the poetical drama. The play was dog-eared "Ingomar" and the greater portion of the large audience seemed to be made up of people who had never seen the play and who had no comprehension of the art of acting. To be sure, Miss Marlowe received their approbation, but so did the groggy Barbarian and his moth-eaten followers. It was a shabby and shiftless representation of a piece that under ordinary circumstances bores the habitual playgoer, who has listened to its sentimental lines more times than he can remember and does not care to hear them again. The *Parthenia* therefore labored under the worst possible disadvantages; she did not even get her cues promptly and correctly. Yet she triumphed over all difficulties and infused the familiar scenes with a novel charm.

Miss Marlowe is not a spectacular *Parthenia*. She did not conquer by a glance or a gesture. She is not statuesque. She is comely and of good figure, but not beautiful. Her eyes are the most attractive feature of her face, which is uncommonly mobile and intelligent. She depicted the simplicity and love of the Greek maiden in a sensible, straightforward manner that convinced the minds and touched the hearts of

everybody present that had a mind and a heart. Her work was marred by none of the failings of the novice. Her touch was always sure, and she impressed the critical observer with a sense of her ability to calculate beforehand the actual effect of every look and gesture. This is a faculty that three-fifths of the actors on the stage do not possess. Her conception of her character was clear and reasonable; her execution of it womanly, and, above all, intelligent. She had no great moments; she made no conspicuous points. But her grasp of the character never relaxed, and she preserved the illusion amid the most distressing surroundings. The episode of the song of love was treated daintily and without exaggeration. The defiance of *Ingomar* was true and affecting and not stagy. She expressed the anger of the girl very vividly and without resort to any hackneyed artifice.

She was equally successful with every other phase of the rôle. She did not carry her expressions of love to the limits of great absorbing passion; but *Parthenia* is not a woman of strong passions. In depicting the ingenuousness of the girl she was not too coy; when she wept the tears seemed to be real, and her smiles seemed to be the reflections of a sunny temperament. Her voice is strong and pleasing, and if she has a singing voice it ought to be a pure contralto. Her tones are never mannish. And best of all, she speaks the English language very well.

All of which goes to show that Miss Marlowe, at the beginning of her career, so far as we know it, is an efficient actress. So she ought to be to undertake, in this metropolis, such a character as *Parthenia* and to put her powers in comparison with those of a dozen acknowledged artists. Yet the surprise of the afternoon, among the small contingent of habitual playgoers present, was the fact that she succeeded.



He concluded with the recording of a conviction. "Of her permanent success," he said, "there can be no doubt."

Mr. Van Cleef, the veteran critic of the *New York Herald*, who next to Mr. Wheeler was most experienced in judging of such occasions, called her, in his review, "a very pretty, bright-looking, sympathetic, brown-haired young girl," and thawed through all the frost of the traditional and professional restraint to pay her spontaneous tribute. "Her work," he said, "was exceptionally pleasing and natural and full of promise for the future. The impersonation, despite certain faults, due chiefly to lack of much experience, was in many ways charming and on occasion forcible. She had everything to contend with, including occasional slips by her assistants. Still she triumphed, and was entered on the record of this season as a success. A marked evidence of this was the fact that the critics, who wandered indifferently into the house in the way of duty, sat to the end of this time-eaten play and were glad they did it."

Then about her looks:

He thought her face "not handsome, but exceedingly engaging," her "eyes beautiful and expressive," and although not yet trained to fierceness, depicting anger "with an effect that is, like Miss Marlowe's entire personality, charmingly womanly." He did not fail to notice "her voice, musical, rich, strong, clear, and never overstrained." He ended with his own prophetic flight. "This much," he oracled, "is

worth saying of Miss Marlowe, because, unlike nearly all newcomers of like pretensions, she is likely to be seen and heard very far up in the ranks of the profession, if her physical strength holds out and she is rightly managed and advised."

Mr. Wheeler wrote in the *World*:

The old, old story of *Ingomar* was told yesterday with new earnestness and new gentleness by a young woman who was unknown to her audience but who speedily won their attention and their respect for her sure dramatic instinct and her delicate accuracy of method. Where she came from, I do not know; where she is going is not so difficult to determine, when it is known that nine managers were willing to make contracts with her before the play was half over. The search after something new brought nearly all the managers in town at the Bijou, and nearly all the unemployed actors and the assemblage resembled those seen at what are called "professional matinées." Something new in *Parthenias* or a fine line of novelties in *Ingomars* is asking a good deal of newcomers, and the audience which assembled yesterday afternoon was as critical as familiarity with the traditions and a reasonable knowledge of the demands of the stage could make it.

But it found something new. Miss Marlowe infused the old lines with an intelligent charm and after riveting the attention commanded the approbation by an effective, tender, and legitimately dramatic rendering of the rôle. She managed to seize upon the womanly side of *Parthenia* and lift the subtle efficacy of a gentle love into something like a new power.

She betrayed none of the usual nervousness of amateurs and none of the self-consciousness of cerebral novices. Her

understanding of the inner significances of *Parthenia's* part was clear and her manifestation of them artistic, sympathetic, and natural. To an intelligent purpose she added a picturesque manner and so with simple touches adorned the old rôle and won her observers delicately but irresistibly.

These were the key-notes in a chorus of praise that strikes one now as truly wonderful, there was so much ringing enthusiasm in it. One of the writers dwelt on the agreeable sensation afforded old playgoers by the début of a young woman that had no affectations and could show a quick and sure intelligence. He said the audience was "surprised beyond expression and as it went out had but one opinion, that Miss Marlowe was a wonder." In a long and careful review of the performance, Stanley McKenna called it "the best *Parthenia* seen in New York in a generation" and declared that the critics were "genuinely surprised." Another writer that the next day had been eloquent of praise was so much impressed by this première that some days later he returned to the subject and said that the great success of that Thursday afternoon had been ever since the talk of the theatrical world. He spoke of the offers from managers that she had received while the performance was on or immediately afterward, and said that the best of these was to take the leading rôle in Steele Mackaye's new play called "Anarchy." But he added that the intention of "this remarkable young woman" was fixed to play in legitimate drama, "and it is only truth to say there is nobody

in this country at present except this young débütante that can fill the vacuum."

Next day, for one moment, she had the rare experience of the chill of a fear about her work; soon come, soon gone. It sprang from the thought that she might not verify all these favorable predictions.

Actors and others that read the glowing eulogies and heard the current comment asked her:

"Aren't you proud?"

"I'd like to be proud," she answered, "proud as Lucifer,—if I only had the time, but you see so far I'm too busy."

The next step, tutor and manager were agreed, must be a New York engagement in a Shakespearean play. She was hard at work preparing for it. One of Colonel Miles's friends in New York was Henry Bristol, proprietor of a restaurant at Sixth Avenue and Eighteenth Street, which was not then "downtown." Mr. Bristol had some sentimental interest in the drama and announced that on the strength of the Bijou Opera House hosannas he was willing to invest \$5,000 in an actress of such merit. Henry E. Abbey was in control of the old Star Theater at Thirteenth Street and Broadway. There fell upon his hands a vacant week between an engagement of Henry Irving and that of a troop of performing monkeys, and obligingly he offered it to Colonel Miles. It was the week of December 12, 1887.

The theatrical season was by this time well ad-

vanced; nearly all good actors were engaged, and the problem of a supporting company was the first anxiety. For leading man, Miss Marlowe desired Joseph Haworth, then at the top of his fame. She had watched his work the previous season with Clara Morris in "Denise," and recognized his versatility and unusual gifts. Mr. Haworth was invited to head the support at the Star.

He received the proposal coldly. "I can't afford to risk my reputation acting with a young woman that will probably fail and cover the whole production with ridicule," he said. "It's too much to ask."

He had never seen Miss Marlowe, but he knew the type, he said. The would-be *Juliets* were the curse of the stage. Miss Dow was conducting the negotiations in Colonel Miles's office in the Bijou. "Wouldn't you like to say the Balcony Scene with Miss Marlowe?" she asked of a sudden. "And then you can tell if she is as bad as you think she is."

Mr. Haworth assented without enthusiasm. Miss Dow proposed that the party should go back upon the stage. Mr. Haworth had no objection. Miss Dow found some furniture and fixings from which she rigged the semblance of a balcony, and Miss Marlowe began. It was noticed that Mr. Haworth lost his air of indifference as the scene went on. With the last word of it he slapped his thigh and said:

"I'll do it."

Instantly, Miss Dow pinned him to a contract.

"How much salary do you wish?" she said.

"I'll do it for \$300," said Haworth. "I usually get \$350, but I'll do it for you for less."

He was right about his usual salary. He had received \$350 a week, equal to \$1,000 now, throughout his engagement with Clara Morris.

He did much more than merely to act so much for so much pay. He took an active interest in the production, and as he was of great experience and unusual mind, his help was invaluable. With his advice, the rest of the company was chosen and drilled.

One of Haworth's closest friends in New York was Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll. A strong bond of sympathy existed between them in their common devotion to Shakespeare, Ingersoll being one of the ablest Shakespearean scholars of his day. He had seen Haworth act, deemed him a worthy exponent of Shakespeare's thought, and so desired his acquaintance. Haworth told Ingersoll about the coming engagement at the Star, and expressed the opinion that the young woman would be found to satisfy the most exacting student. The Colonel was incredulous. In his experience he had seen a flock of these promised swans prove to be geese and so vanish. But he said that as usual he would go to the theater to enjoy the art of his good friend Haworth.

A few days before the opening night Haworth sought Miss Dow and timidly suggested that he would like to have a box for a party of friends on the opening night.



"Anything you want," said Miss Dow. "Who are your friends?"

"Colonel Ingersoll and his family," said Hawthorth.

"A box?" said Miss Dow. "Take the whole proscenium."

Neither she nor any one else surmised what was to come of that box party.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TEST RELENTLESS



OR her first real appearance before New York and its self-satisfied criticism, Miss Marlowe deliberately walked into the lions' den. Of her own independent free will she chose to make her *début* in "Romeo and Juliet," a selection that showed a courage (or a hardihood) almost sublime and classic. To those that understood the real situation in the theatrical field of the metropolis it was still worse, even to bewilderment. In the whole range of dramatic literature she could not have chosen a more unpromising piece for such an occasion, nor on the earth's round projection a more unpromising place in which to show for the first time the *Juliet* of her studies.

"O Lord, how many of them I have seen!" wrote one of the weary dramatic critics about this time, referring to the ambitious novices. He was expressing the feeling of all his fellows. So great was their resentful disgust that even the fairest-minded and gentlest among them could hardly be expected to come unprejudiced to another exhibition of the order he had learned most to abhor. The very *réclame* she had won by that appearance at the Bijou told against her now to the increasing

of his ill-will. One of the detested brood had violated tradition and sacred prescription by succeeding as *Parthenia*. By the beard of the Prophet, then, she can never succeed as *Juliet*!

There were other difficulties and still worse. Dramatic criticism, supposing it to have by chance any logic or reason, must still be admitted to be necessarily without tangible standards. The critic believes in what he likes and hunts about for reasoning to support what he believes in. This amiable process, while easy enough when applied to a new play, has certain practical drawbacks when applied to Shakespeare and may in itself be fatal to a new performer in a Shakespearean part. The standard of what he likes that the critic applies to the newcomer is usually an echo of his impressions of other actors he has seen in that part, and has no reference to the part as it exists in the book. When even a scholarly, learned critic like von Schlegel, masterly expert in the texts and never harried by the insatiable fiend of the presses in the cellar, would admit that his own conceptions of Shakespeare had been greatly changed when he came to see Shakespeare acted, what should be expected in men much less studious?

This is what Edwin Booth meant when he uttered that great philosophic truth, "The critics know only what we have taught them." In the necessarily over-hurried, over-stimulated, and over-wrought conditions of modern journalism the bases could hardly be otherwise. Few men that for

their living write daily for a newspaper have time to make careful and renewed exploration in Shakespearean mysteries. They have seen a performance of *Juliet* that pleased them. They have not had time to consider whether this *Juliet* was Shakespeare's or somebody else's, but every successive *Juliet* is consciously or unconsciously measured against this. Let now a *Juliet* appear whose only standard is Shakespeare, and the mere fact that her performance is different is enough to start down upon her the whole avalanche of tradition.

Besides, *Juliet* was at that time in New York the most commonly played of all Shakespeare's heroines. So, then, every critic had long before found the *Juliet* that suited his fancy. As this had become his ideal that he was ready to tilt for at any time, the outlook for any newcomer in the lists would seem to be fairly perilous.

Even more was at work against this venturesome intruder. There was then beginning and already powerful in New York an influence that a few years later she must combat with all her resources and all her courage, an influence so curious, so interesting, and so productive of civil war in the critical academy, that in this narrative it must have a chapter to itself. As we shall see later, it greatly affected the nature and trend of newspaper opinion and at the very outset was likely to array itself against her.

Nevertheless, she was resolved to meet this first crisis in her career with the portraiture that she liked best. It would be her first playing of it in pub-



*Copyright by Falk*

*Juliet ON THE WAY TO THE Friar's CELL*





lic; for years she had been playing it in her mind and in Miss Dow's parlor. Fanny Kemble is said to have prepared her *Juliet* in six weeks. Julia Marlowe took as many years. She had been studying the commentators as well as the text; she had evolved theories and ideas of her own about the part. She thought Shakespeare had conceived a person of extraordinary force and resources of character, latent and unrevealed until they began to be disclosed by the touch of sorrow. To her mind the first great manifestation of *Juliet's* evolution was in the scene where she appeals to the nurse, her ancient comforter and friend, and is overwhelmed with worldly wise but wicked counsel. That instant character begins to develop; and from that time on she built steadfastly and carefully the idea of resolute self-reliance up to the last tragic crying out in the tomb:

O happy dagger!

This is thy sheath.

In real life, no person could be possessed of such underlying solidities of character without some intimations of them even in times of prosperity and ease of soul. To suggest this hidden force in these earlier scenes when the untried *Juliet* is no more than a child may be believed to possess as much difficulty as any problem in the range of acting. Yet it must be done if there is not to be a transition violent and unnatural when the trial comes. Miss Marlowe in her long walks in Central Park,

among the Jersey meadows, along the shore of the Kill van Kull, had come to think she had found the right perspective for this picture. That night in the Star Theater, she made trial of what she had learned.

Colonel Ingersoll sat in his box and watched with approval the work of his friend Haworth in the earlier scenes before *Juliet* appeared. As a Shakespearean, he was always content with Haworth's intelligent and scholarlike methods, and expected no more from that evening's offerings. With the first words that *Juliet* uttered he fixed his wondering attention upon her. When the Ballroom Scene was half over, he turned to Mrs. Ingersoll and said:

"By George, there's an actress!"

Throughout the Balcony Scene he sat, as he said afterward, like one in a trance. He had long abandoned all hope of hearing *Juliet's* lines read like this. He had thought that exquisite and unmatched spirit buried forever in Verona; now she came forth exactly as he had visioned her, alive and speaking music. A new planet had swum into the ken of this watcher of the skies. In the intermission that followed that act he moved in a kind of a rapturous ecstasy to the lobby, and there was William Winter, venerable critic of the *Tribune*. Mr. Winter, for certain reasons, was hostile to youthful aspirants.

"What do you think of that?" said Ingersoll. "Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it glorious? Did you ever hear Shakespeare spoken like that?"

"Poof!" said Winter. "The Balcony Scene! Anybody can do the Balcony Scene well. Wait till she comes to the Potion Scene. Then you'll see. She'll fail completely."

"You critics make me tired," said the Colonel. "You sit in your little cells playing with your little fingers on your little yardsticks and don't see anything else. I tell you a girl that can read like that is a genius, and you'll see the day when you'll have to acknowledge it."

He spoke with heat, and Mr. Winter was plainly nettled; the lobby was filled, the Colonel took no pains to modulate his voice, and the effect of his words was of a public rebuke. It is likely that it helped in no way to better the rest of the performance in the mind of Mr. Winter. He was enlisted in the critics' war I have mentioned, he had long-settled beliefs as to actresses whose supremacy was not to be challenged, and in his case, certainly, the nettle proved a plant of hardy growth. Nearly ten years elapsed before he recovered his equanimity about Miss Marlowe and then he made ingenuous and rather charming confession of first error.

Colonel Ingersoll went back to his box and throughout the rest of the play his delight grew with his conviction that at last his dream had been realized. At the end, with all his party he moved upon the stage and taking the young star's hand in both of his, told her his debt to her, that after so many years of disappointments he had been able to see and to hear the *Juliet* of the book. But it was

so always with all Shakespeareans, in America, in England. There are poets' poets, and musicians' musicians; this was the Shakespearean's *Juliet*.

The effect upon the general audience that night was of a greatly notable achievement, a marvelously beautiful creation, a *Juliet* of a new and commanding eminence. This was certain, despite the fact that no one could expect such a *Juliet* to mean as much to the average playgoer as it meant to students. The demonstrations of approval rose with each act; at the close there was an ovation. From a technical point of view the performance had obvious deficiencies. That *Juliet* as she came first from this young player's hands could approach the overspiring and finished impersonation it finally became would be out of reason. There were many passages that, melodiously pitched and perfectly read, still lacked authority. She did things that a year later she had ceased to do. But when every shortcoming of youth and inexperience had been duly cited, there remained this lovely and daintily proportioned figure—*Juliet the Real!*

The critics liked it, or parts of it, or may be what they could understand of it; but there was no such unison of unhesitating plaudits as there had been after the Bijou day. Some failed to understand all of her conception, a lesion natural enough and maybe inevitable. To some the idea of playing the Potion Scene with restraint instead of vehemence seemed to show weakness; it did not occur to them that restraint might be an element of strength and that

as Miss Marlowe had conceived the part their kind of a *Juliet* would be impossible. What? After those earlier scenes, all done in the chords of a power, greater if less obvious—after them a declaiming *Juliet*, an elocutionizing *Juliet*, a *Juliet* that gasped, gurgled, shrieked and shrilled? Lord save us, what a thought! No, not here, certainly. Something was due to consistency, something to human possibility. The custom of the stage might be different and that custom might lay its leaden mace upon criticism as elsewhere. But the kind of *Juliet* possible at the beginning must be *Juliet* still possible at the end.

Perhaps the most significant comment made upon that night's work was offered by a scholarly dreamer who said that Miss Marlowe's acting in *Juliet* was like a Doric column, superb in its absolute chastity of design and without a suggestion of meretricious ornament. This was just and true. Mr. Van Cleef of the *Herald* thought so. He said that based upon this performance the new *Juliet* would be one of the best actresses in the country. He found her "in age, face, and figure, finely equipped for the part of Verona's unfortunate patrician maid." "Her expression, too, and her manner," he wrote, "are winsome and sympathetic. Her voice falls pleasantly on the ear, while intelligence marks her reading and her acting. Force and fervor, too, give their stamp to her work. In short, Miss Marlowe's *Juliet* was a success." He concluded that "while her impersonation was in no sense great it was eminently pleasing

and in general, natural, being also marked by an attractive individuality. It was received by the large audience with strong evidences of both friendly feeling and sympathetic appreciation."

The attitude of the audience caused more than one writer to think that the young woman's personal friends had turned out in force to welcome her—her that had no friend except Aunt Ada and knew not six persons in the entire house.

Mr. Winter made in his critique the rejoinder to Colonel Ingersoll that his feelings had prevented him from making in the theater lobby. He wrote that "Miss Marlowe's performance of *Juliet* while it was in no way distinctive, revealed intelligence, sensibility, capacity for the art of acting, close observation of what has usually been done in this character, good imitative talent and considerable stage training. Miss Marlowe is a girl of picturesque and pleasing aspect, tall, slender, dark and of ardent temperament. She has a good voice, not well-trained. The nature denoted by her acting was gentle but remarkably self-controlled and quite devoid of fascination." He added that while in the earlier scenes of the play the sentiment of love although indicated in a conventional and commonplace manner, was indicated distinctly and with girlish sweetness; "neither then nor later was the passion of love indicated at all." He found fault with her for using *Juliet's* Banished Scene, "which the best of modern *Juliets* have usually discarded." He disapproved of her other departures from tra-



dition, with her treatment of the Ballroom Scene and with everything Mr. Haworth did.

Mr. Dithmar took exactly the opposite view in regard to the Banished Scene and other points, but found objections of his own. He said:

In Miss Marlowe's case overpraise seems so uncalled for as to be impertinent, for the young actress approaches her task seriously and with an abundant understanding, she has a well-defined purpose and in her endeavor to execute it she gives evidence of so much thoughtful preparation and reveals, or partly reveals, a nature so sympathetic and so well adapted to artistic expression that her work deserves earnest critical attention and the encouragement conveyed by a careful judgment of its merits and defects.

When Miss Marlowe acted *Parthenia* at the Bijou Opera House two months ago she was successful beyond question. Young as she is that character is quite within her grasp, but Shakespeare's *Juliet* is another matter. The heights and depths of *Juliet's* love and despair are limitless as far as the dramatic art of this era is concerned. The best of stage *Juliets* can only faintly interpret the radiant beauty and lofty passion of Shakespeare's conception.

He thought that Miss Marlowe was "not yet sure enough of herself to give full play to her powers in the forcible passages" and her art was "not yet sufficiently matured to express the whole meaning of the character," but that she understood it fairly well was evident at all times. He concluded that she would grow much further into the rôle with experience and might in time be mistress of it.

Nym Crinkle, too, was only in part convinced.

He admitted that the occasion was interesting and that Miss Marlowe captured the audience but thought "she was not the ardent love maiden of the ever favorite Shakespearean tragedy." She "had her lines well-learned, and her every movement was full of grace and picturesque posing, but there was no fire below her action." When she was a simple daughter of the Capulets, it was true, "she won every heart," but it was in the "real test acts" that "she did not fill the requirements of the part."

On the other hand, Charles Metcalf declared unreservedly that she had "demonstrated her right to be recognized as a great actress," and "confirmed the opinion that a career of distinction would reward her endeavor." He found that her *Juliet* in breadth of conception was "correct and appreciative of the character," and freely conceded her victory. He made note of the singular impressiveness of her sincerity, the natural reading of her lines, the clearness of her utterance, the genuineness of her feeling and the persuasive quality of her simplicity.

Five other critics held similar views. Casting up the verdicts for and against, any beginner might have been justly elated. But in the mind of the girl that had made all this stir one fact was more important than all printed comment. Before an audience to which she was totally unknown she had revealed the *Juliet* she had found in the text and that audience had instantly perceived and reacted to the portraiture she had drawn. No laurel wreath



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*Viola—1889*



that could be woven was worth looking at when compared with that demonstration.

"Romeo and Juliet" was followed by "Ingomar" when Miss Marlowe repeated the great success she had won at the Bijou. In the audience that night sat the veteran Lester Wallack, seasoned (if any man in New York might be) about plays, players and débutantes. He had never seen Miss Marlowe, but since October his ears had been filled with her name from her admirers, and he now made a pilgrimage to the place of so many of his own great triumphs to see this new challenger for fame. At the end of the first act, he said to his companion:

"She is a charming girl, but she ought to be in a stock company to be trained."

At the end of the third act he said:

"Oh, no—I made a great mistake! She does not need any training in a stock company. All that fine original quality of hers would be ruined by stock company work. I hope she will go on as she is."

The impression must have been strong upon him, and lasting. Three days later he went to the trouble, unusual with him, of writing to the young woman that had given him in his old age a new sensation. He said:

213 W. 34th Street,  
Dec. 16th.

My dear Miss Marlowe:

I had the pleasure of witnessing your performance of *Parthenia* on Tuesday evening, and I cannot refrain from expressing to you how pleased and surprised I was.

213. W. 34<sup>th</sup> St  
Dec 18<sup>th</sup>

My dear Miss Marlowe,

I had the pleasure  
of witnessing your performance  
of "Puck" on Tuesday  
evening - and I cannot  
refrain from expressing to  
you how pleased and surprised  
I was - Pleased - because the performance  
was most graceful and charming  
in every way - Surprised - because

LESTER WALLACK'S LETTER



in, one so young in the  
profession. It was astonishing  
to see how very easy little  
He was to find fault with.

Pray accept <sup>my</sup> congratulations  
and my sincere wish <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~  
a long and brilliant career  
awaits you -

Faithfully yours

Lestrittballack.

Pleased, because the performance was most graceful and charming in every way; surprised, because in one so young in the profession, it was astonishing to see how very, *very* little there was to find fault with.

Pray accept my congratulations and my sincere wish that a long and brilliant career awaits you.

Faithfully yours,

LESTER WALLACK.

The next night of the engagement, Wednesday, December 14, she gave her first public portrayal of *Viola* in "Twelfth Night." Here again was bold adventuring, for Mme. Modjeska and Ellen Terry had but lately been seen in that part and each had been applauded by the critics as faultless and moving. It was a different *Viola* that confronted them at the Star that night and some viewed it with astonishment and some with little favor. I have given elsewhere in this book an outline of Miss Marlowe's convictions about *Viola* and need not repeat it here. To some of the writers of that day her views seem to have been startlingly novel, as may be gathered from the chief commentaries on this performance:

"The freshness and spontaneity of Miss Marlowe's *Viola*," wrote Mr. Dithmar, "and the sympathy she manifests with that character prove, more than anything else she has done, her fitness for the calling she has chosen. The measure of success attending her effort to embody this lovely personification of womanly faith and gentleness shows also her adaptability to a wide range of parts in the poetic

drama that do not require in their portrayal great tragic force or intensity of passion."

A celebrated critic whose name I have forgotten wrote that this "excellent impersonation of *Viola* added to her laurels. In the part, her slight and supple figure, graceful carriage, evident youth, and handsome features showed admirably. She made as pretty a boy as one could wish to see and the masquerade as *Cesario* was equaled only by the delicate shading she gave to the true character of the lovely and lovable heroine of 'Twelfth Night.'" He felt that "the young actress caught the light, airy, and poetic spirit of the comedy and at no time broke or strained the finely woven threads of *Viola's* character," and that in work of this kind Miss Marlowe was at her best.

Mr. Metcalf pointed out that on three successive nights she had played three widely different parts all making extreme demands upon her resources and skill and from this severe and unusual test had come triumphantly. He found that in *Viola* she had shone "with more brilliancy, if possible, than on any previous occasion." He found her expression and manner extremely winning and sympathetic, "while wonderful intelligence marks her reading and acting, yet always displaying a certain delicacy that lends additional charm" to her work.

In a review of the dramatic week Moody Merrill wrote that he was predisposed to talk about Julia Marlowe and her success because she and her agent had refused to talk about herself. "How

absolutely novel it seems," he went on, "to see a début made on the stage in the old self-respecting way with the thing turning on whether the débutante has talent or not, rather than on how many dresses she has or how much she has done for orphan asylums or how far she has been scandalized with the Prince of Wales!" He said that of all the long line of débutantes he had seen he could scarcely remember the name of one, but well he recalled their fearful and wonderful toilets, their painful incapacity, "and the way age and ugliness had in many cases marked them for their own. Sometimes their clothes were expensive and sometimes the trail of the amateur dressmaker was over them all, but in either case they were usually poor and unsuitable and undramatic. Clothes can have the right expression as well as countenances.

"Whether lavishly or economically done the experiment always cost a small fortune and in every case except that of the superlatively advertised Mrs. Potter was as certainly doomed to failure, as was the deadhead audience to sorrow. The observation of all this misplaced expenditure (often under a great strain to the misguided experimenter) has darkened my existence. Consequently Miss Marlowe has brightened it.

"Miss Marlowe has done, so far as the public can see, a perfectly sensible and wise thing in going on the stage. Miss Marlowe is young, Miss Marlowe is fair and Miss Marlowe has definite dramatic talent. She is not a great *Juliet* but neither was Ade-

laide Neilsen nor Miss O'Neill the first time she played the part.

"As *Viola* and *Parthenia* she is charming and with the great advantage of her youth she may soon expect to distance all rivals as *Viola*. Mary Anderson and she can then divide the honors of *Parthenia* between them. Good luck go with her! We owe her a debt for demonstrating the incredible proposition that it is still possible to succeed on merit."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STARTING



FROM her triumphs at the Star Theater that week, Miss Marlowe was launched directly upon a six weeks' tour under the management of Colonel Miles. Too much of the theatrical season had lapsed to allow of a longer excursion. Some echoes of her New York success galvanized the local press into a showing of interest and curiosity. The public responded as well as it could be expected to respond in the circumstances; a new actress that had still to verify the repute of her first appearance. But the total financial returns were not heavy and the advances of Maecenas, the restaurant keeper, melted away like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face. Mr. Haworth's engagements would not allow him to continue with the company: his place was taken by Charles Welles, who had been leading man with Lawrence Barrett and was a capable actor, but not of Haworth's rank.

The first city on the route was Cincinnati, Miss Marlowe's old home, though little attempt was made to exploit that fact. Colonel Ingersoll, sitting in his study at No. 400 Fifth Ave-



nue, was the persistent, volunteer and virtually the only press agent of the enterprise. On his own initiative and only for the joy of advancing a Shakespearean, he wrote letters to friends in every city she was to visit, telling them of the coming of the young actress and of her rare worth. Murat Halstead was then editor of the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette* and to him Colonel Ingersoll wrote this:

400 Fifth Avenue,  
January 22, '88.

My dear Mr. Halstead:

In a few days Miss Marlowe, a young actress, will appear in your city. She has had but little experience—a month or two—and yet, in my opinion, she is one of the greatest artists on the American stage.

*I want you to see her.*

Judged by the ordinary standard, she has what the average critic calls faults. But even these faults are so gracefully committed that they seem at the worst to be weeds in blossom.

She is the impersonation of unconscious grace—natural as heaven's blue. *I want you to see her.* Take my word for it, that you will not feel that an evening has been lost.

Yours always,

R. G. INGERSOLL.

"Ingomar" was selected for the opening night in Cincinnati. The house happened to be full, an unusual benefaction in those days, and due chiefly to Colonel Ingersoll's letters. These fitted psychologically into the story of that queer afternoon at the Bijou, a story that had been widely repeated. Cincinnati duplicated the verdict of the Bijou; even

·400 FIFTH AVENUE·

Jan 22. 88-

My Dear Mr. Holstead,

In a few days, Miss Marlowe, a young actress, will appear in your city. She has had but little experience - a month or two - and yet in my opinion, she is one of the greatest artists on the American stage

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LETTER

I want you to see her. —

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standards, she has what the  
average critic calls faults.  
But even these faults are  
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to be weeds in blossom.

She is the impersonation  
of unconscious grace —  
natural as heaven's blue.

I want you to see her.

Take my word for it, that  
you will not feel that  
an evening has been lost

Yours always

B. G. Ingersoll

to the floral tributes, which fell upon the stage in windrows. The very words of the people that swarmed there when the play was done were the same. There was never a severer tempting of youth and inexperience; she might excusably have swelled with conceited vanity and so become in mind and soul fat-weedy and satisfied—truly a fearful state! A reasoning sense of the vicissitudes of life was strong in her borderer ancestors and must have been assertive in her; not even the praise of the local press, unvarying throughout the week and for every new rôle, changed her own notion of herself. "I was just at the beginning of the road, nowhere near the end," was her own comment.

She did *Viola*, and she did *Juliet* to the delight of audiences, and on Thursday night, February 11, 1883, she made her first appearance as *Julia* in "The Hunchback," a play she had been four years preparing. She liked it well and respected it; she used to say of it that while the language and the dynamics could never be compared with Shakespeare, and while the verse went sometimes on stilts, there was in the part of *Julia* a peculiar sweetness of innocent and gracious womanhood with the rudiments of stronger character that should delight any actress to portray. The piece has vanished from the stage now; perhaps it has gone forever into the huge lumber room littered with stacks of "The Rival Queens," "All for Love," and other old-time favorites once deemed immortal. If so, it perished after a great career, the part of *Julia* having added to the

fame of such actresses as Helen Faucit in England and Mrs. Bowers and Julia Dean in America. In 1888 it was revered as a classic. Eminent critics declared that *Julia's* lines beginning with "Clifford, why don't you speak to me?" were the great test of an actress' skill; if she could rise to them she could hope to conquer any part in any play. This seems Victorian and comic now; but they actually said it.

As in all the other rôles she had so far attempted, she challenged in *Julia* direct comparison with actresses of established popularity. In Cincinnati to do this was more than usually hazardous; Cincinnati remembered well the great performance of "The Hunchback" it had seen at its Dramatic Festival when the cast included Mary Anderson, Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, Nat Goodwin, John Ellsler, Kate Forsyth, and others hardly less Olympian. Yet Cincinnati, after watching critically this performance with a generally inferior cast and no accessories worth mentioning, came to the recorded conclusion that this *Julia* surpassed the *Julia* of the Festival, because this actress had found in the part unsuspected depths of character and had revealed them with sure, clear strokes. "In a year from now," wrote one admirer, "there will be no other *Julia* in America fit to compare with this."

For the rest of the week she repeated "Ingomar" on Friday night, gave "Romeo and Juliet" on Saturday afternoon, and finished Saturday night with glory and much applause in "The Lady of Lyons,"

a piece she had not done since Natick, Massachusetts—Natick of the \$3.15 door receipts—and piously hoped she might not often do again.

Mrs. Hess sat in a box and observed with beaming countenance the flowers that fell at the feet of the girl that used to curl up in her attic to read "Ivanhoe." The boarding-house contingent attended in force, full of pride and loyalty.

The gained positions at Cincinnati having been thus consolidated, the next advance was upon the critical fortifications of Chicago, an ordeal that by some was viewed with trepidation. In Chicago were critics of national repute and more than Spartan rectitude—rejoicing (and methinks over-rejoicing) in the belief that no verdict from the effete East weighed a feather in the making of their estimations. Indeed, it was rather believed that praise in the eastern press was a detriment in the view of some of these sons of Zoilus, leaning backward in the attempt to stand straight. The Marlowe company offered to these and others on Monday, February 16, its version and production of "Ingomar," and the next day the critics signed a unanimous note of capitulation. Some of them admitted they had been a trifle prejudiced against the new actress by "the aggressive enthusiasm of uncritical friends," aiming thus a side swoop at Colonel Ingersoll for intruding upon their reservation and peculiar ministry. But they said they forgot their resentment when they had listened for a few moments to so conquering a voice. Mr. Elwyn A. Barron, the



scholarly critic of the *Inter Ocean*, dwelt upon "the presence of her modest beauty, sincere feeling, thorough earnestness, and the spontaneous truth of a fine intelligence," and so summed what seemed the general verdict of a happy audience; happy, but not large. "Few but fit," said the actress, glancing at the box office report. The engagement might possibly pay bare expenses.

*Viola* followed *Parthenia*, and was equally acclaimed. Wondering note was made that this actress played with a manifest joy and delight in the sheer art of what she was doing, a peculiar and refreshing trait; that she was unaffected by the size of her audience, and yet was not conscious of any effort to play well to empty benches; she played well because she loved to play well, loved *Viola* and loved to linger over her character points as a painter loves to finish some pet scene, alone in his studio. To some persons, this showing of an uncommon mentality was as interesting as her acting. But Mr. Barron did not agree with her conception of *Viola*. He thought she presented "a very pleasing and interesting reflex" of the spirit of the part, but not the spirit itself; because, he said, she failed "to differentiate the real femininity and the assumed mannishness of the character. She has learned how to wear doublet and hose with freedom, but she has not yet discovered the trick of jaunty effrontery, the composure of dignity, the nice pretense of offended pride and the cleverly satirical quality."

Miss Marlowe had been studying for some years

the part of *Viola*, turning it to and fro, considering it with the aid of commentators and of resort to the texts, and she had not been able to discover in it that a "jaunty effrontery," a "nice pretense of offended pride," or a "cleverly satirical quality" were its vital features. None of these seemed compatible with the *Viola* of her understanding then, nor with the picture that grew upon her from the text. Thirty years after that performance in Chicago, when she had played *Viola* hundreds of times, and had never ceased to contemplate and to study its depths and subtleties, she was still in the main, unchanged in her view of it. Mr. Barron himself had come long before to agree with her portrayal. Even in that first week he agreed wholly with her conception of *Juliet* and said so with feeling and emphasis. It was a notable week—in the way of art. If thundering applause and many recalls could be transmuted into coin, the occasion would have been sumptuous for all concerned. The plays were given in the order adopted at Cincinnati; the audiences grew in size with each night. In the press the reception could not have been more cordial; the nearest to a dissent came from a critic that lamented the absence in Miss Marlowe's work of attempts to handle familiar scenes with the vigorous climacteric to which we were in those days most accustomed. It was, in fact, an argument in favor of scoring points. "But I never believed in scoring points," said Miss Marlowe years afterward, reviewing her experiences in that critical time. "I was happier to have



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*Julia*  
("The Hunchback")



somebody find fault because I didn't make them than I would have been to be praised for putting them in. To make points! Is that acting?"

Somebody asked her if she could remember her sensations when she read so many columns of eloquent praise, such as was poured out that week in Chicago, and she a mere beginner, only two or three weeks a star. She said:

"I remember well. Would you be surprised if I should say that I was not in the least surprised? That sounds egotistical, but what I mean is that I was so certain of success these tributes all seemed natural and no more than I had expected. I had seen certain things in these characters. The public saw them too. I had felt sure it would see them. You must remember that I had been for years looking forward to this and preparing for it. I felt so sure I could not fail that I suppose failure was impossible.

"But some things in the favorable reviews of that time made me smile to myself. I saw I knew more about the plays than the critics knew. When a writer found fault with me for not putting into a part something that was not in the lines, never has been, could not be, I said, 'Take to your text, old fellow, and see.' But nothing he said had the slightest effect in inducing me to change the picturing. I knew I was right and he was wrong. I thought it likely that the audience, or much of it, might be as little familiar with the text as the critic. But I had a queer little intuition that, I suppose, never


fails the serious actor or speaker. It was that I was impressing the audience with my feeling about the impersonation. I knew this impersonation was correct with the book. That was all I cared about.

"I remember, too, that I laughed aloud at the good solemn soul that thought I should be making 'points.' He seemed to think I had never considered this. It had been for years in my mind. Miss Dow, who was an excellent old-school actress, would have agreed with him perfectly, for that was one of the questions about which we continually differed. Once, and once only, to oblige her, I experimented with this conception of art. I was more than satisfied after that to leave it alone. It was old, respectable, and supported by worshipful authority. But not for me. This writer, like some others, based all his estimates of a player's work upon this one notion. If all the rest had been of his mind, they would have meant nothing to me. For, shall I tell you a little secret? I looked upon reviews and notices from purely the business point of view. I wanted them to be good for the sake of business, but there was never one of them that led me to make the least change in conception or performance. This without the least disrespect for the worthy critics. But I knew what I wanted to do and they did not."



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MIND MANAGERIAL

FROM Chicago the next week the company went first to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where a pleasant incident awaited it. The people that came to see "Ingomar" were so greatly delighted that many inquired if it were not possible for Miss Marlowe to appear again in their city. Manager Miles happened to have a vacant night two weeks ahead. He readjusted his tour, and the next night Miss Marlowe played "The Lady of Lyons" in Fort Wayne to a crowded house. The local press received both performances with enthusiasm. Detroit was next in the list, then Toledo, Ohio, Grand Rapids and Jackson, Michigan, Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio, and Richmond, Indiana, where the brief tour ended. The results had been conclusive. In six weeks Miss Marlowe's place had been fixed as among the representative actresses of the day. She had tested her quality before discriminating audiences in large cities accustomed to the best and in all her tour she had not received one bad notice in any newspaper; no, nor even one that was lukewarm in its praise, strange as that may seem. She went back to New York surer than ever of her future, but with an empty purse.

With Miss Dow, she now went to live at the Hotel Arno, an unpretentious hostelry that then adorned the east side of Broadway between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth streets and of which not a trace remains. As before in her experience she had received nothing for her work; Miss Dow was similarly unprovided except in hope; and they found with joy that at the modest Arno they could live for \$2 a day.

The first work in hand was to arrange for the coming season. From the close of the second act of "Ingomar" that afternoon at the Bijou, Julia Marlowe had been in receipt of many offers of employment, but none of them with attractions for her. As soon as it was known that she was again in New York, the managers began to send to the Arno overtures that they regarded as marvelously alluring. She did not stop to debate or consider, but resolutely rejected them all. She was living from hand to mouth, industriously patching and turning her threadbare clothes; she had offers of salaries that for those days were great; and none of them moved her.

Charles Frohman and William Gillette wished her to take the leading part in "The Legal Wreck," a slashing piece they were about to bring out in New York.

"But I am not interested in 'The Legal Wreck' nor in any modern play," says the actress.

Mr. Frohman and Mr. Gillette were properly astonished.

"Why not?"

"Because all my interest is in the Shakespearean and similar drama. That is the only fashion of play I care to play in."

"I don't know why. You know such plays are so artificial and so far from nature. Besides, they are always unprofitable."

"Well," said she, despairing of making herself understood, "I don't fancy myself in a modern drama. I never look well in modern clothes."

Mr. Frohman observed her gravely.

"Well, I don't know," said he, condescendingly. "You look very pretty in those you have on."

The plain little blouse she was wearing that day had been made for her by Anne Frehill, a character that almost deserves a chapter to herself. She had been a maid in some wealthy household in New York but, growing old and indifferent, had been cashiered. Once she saw Miss Marlowe act and was thereafter her devoted slave, looking after her with maternal solicitude and feeling it an honor to sew a new frock or turn an old one for so great an actress. She was now occupying a microscopic hall bedroom in the Arno and serving without compensation as Miss Marlowe's maid, body guard, and seamstress.

A. M. Palmer was one of the leading theatrical managers of New York and eager to make a contract with the laureate *Juliet* of the Star Theater engagement. He controlled the American rights to Sardou's "Theodora," which Lillian Olcott for-

merly had played at Niblo's Garden, and he wished Miss Marlowe to take the title part and head a company to produce the play across the continent. *Juliet* heard him patiently and then said:

"Oh, no! I couldn't play such a part."

Said Papa Palmer, as from a height:

"You have shown great ability as an actress. I think you can play almost any part you may undertake."

She should have risen temperamentally and swept in dudgeon from his office, or maybe turned upon him with burning basilisk eyes. More than once in her career she showed an inability to do the thing that temperament and the prima donna tradition demanded. She now merely smiled patiently and said:

"You don't understand. I want to play only noble things and only good women. I would not care for a part like this no matter how great might be my success in it."

Soon after Mr. Palmer returned with another bright idea. He wished her to join his stock company, in which Agnes Booth and other sterling players were then performing.

"Under what conditions?" asked *Juliet*, warily. "Should I be under some stage manager and be obliged to do what he told me to do?"

"Why, yes," said Palmer. "You know that is the way in a stock company."

"Oh, that would never do for me," said *Juliet*. "I should not like that."

J. M. Hill was another manager of some note in those days. He had piloted Miss Margaret Mather into a considerable success on the legitimate stage and some one suggested that he could do much better with Julia Marlowe. In an ill-advised moment Miss Dow took her graduate to see him. He listened perfunctorily to Miss Dow's representations, and quickly allowed his visitors to see that he had no notion of encouraging a rival to Miss Mather and was eager to be rid of them.

"Wouldn't you like to have Miss Marlowe recite the Balcony Scene for you," said Miss Dow in desperation, "that you may have a chance to judge of her quality?"

"Oh, yes,"—indifferently.

So Miss Marlowe recited the Balcony Scene and Mr. Hill toyed boredly with a pair of desk scissors. After which he bowed them out. Their next hope was Daniel Frohman, who was esteemed to be of better understanding and more scholarly instincts than most managers. He had directed Mme. Modjeska's tours and, as Mme. Modjeska had been a famous *Viola*, it was thought that he probably knew more about "Twelfth Night" than some other plays. Accordingly, Miss Marlowe, accompanied by Miss Dow, regaled him one day in his office with two scenes from "Twelfth Night," the Ring Scene and "She Never Told Her Love." In the Ring Scene occurs the line, "How will this fadge?" and so on. At this point she had then and ever after a way of counting off upon her fingers

the complications that had arisen across poor *Cesar*'s tangled path.

"Don't you think it a great mistake to do that?" said Mr. Frohman, imitating her motions.

"Oh, no," said Julia Marlowe. "It is necessary to the character. She is communing with herself and trying to find a way out of the complications. She is motivated exactly like Robinson Crusoe with his list of good things and bad. If his business then was natural and colorful, this is still more so. Time has approved him, you know."

Apparently, Mr. Frohman had not before thought of this point of view, but its soundness was afterward attested by thirty-seven years of the Marlowe "Twelfth Night."

Mr. Frohman offered her a place in his stock company to play in modern plays. She declined it.

John L. Stoddard, the travel lecturer, was then occupying the Grand Opera House every Sunday evening with his instructive entertainments. He sent word that on a certain Sunday night he would show Miss Marlowe's portrait on the screen, and invited her and Miss Dow to come to the Opera House and see it. Henry French was the manager of the Grand Opera House. Mr. Stoddard added that Mr. French would be there and he wished to arrange an introduction for Miss Marlowe to an enterprising and successful New York manager. The introduction took place in the lobby. Mr. French looked Miss Marlowe over critically, and then said:



"So you want to play *Juliet*—and things of that sort?"

Miss Marlowe admitted that she had inclinations in that direction.

"Ah! well," said Mr. French, "that is done by only one actress in a generation. Now, Mary Anderson has already done it, and she, you know, is beautiful."

"I am not," said the candidate. "My hopes are not founded on my looks. I don't understand that any one has a copyrighted monopoly on playing *Juliet*. Anyway, I am proceeding on the idea that there is always room for another, if she has anything genuine to offer."

Mr. French was not pleased with the answer nor with the star. Three years later, he was in the city of Washington managing an actress of his own choosing in a popular comedy and saw Miss Marlowe in unpopular tragedy carry off the honors of the box receipts.

There was an active demand for her photographs, and she went on invitation to the studio of Falk, who was a famous photographer for theatrical folk, and had new plates made in all her characters. While thus engaged, Mr. Falk learned from Miss Dow how difficult was the task to find a manager for the production of Shakespeare's plays and offered to finance such an undertaking. A manager was now secured in Ariel N. Barney, who had been manager for Thomas W. Keene, and the season of 1888-1889 was mapped.

But this led to unforeseen complications. Mme. Modjeska, after years of activity, had decided to withdraw from the stage for a period of rest. The members of her company were, therefore, available for support in the legitimate drama and Manager Barney engaged all of them. Robert Taber was the leading man; Mary Shaw and other excellent players were included. Mme. Modjeska was kind, considerate, and sympathetic. All the people that played with her were devoted to her and believed her to be incomparable in all her rôles. But many of these were parts that Miss Marlowe was to do, and in all respects she did them differently from Mme. Modjeska's way. It was necessary then for the company to discard all the business to which it had long been accustomed and to substitute that of the iron-willed young woman that had succeeded to the scepter.

This alone would have been enough to make trouble. But, in addition, these players conceived that in some way Mme. Modjeska's judgment, reputation, knowledge, virtuosity or something was disparaged by these changes and they bitterly resented the imputation. Next, some of the important members felt that the newcomer was an upstart, an intruder in the realms of art that had begun at the top instead of winning, as they had won, from the bottom of the ladder. It was a stormy season; Miss Marlowe had to fight her way through every rehearsal. Discipline in theatrical companies puts a barrier on open rebellion, but up to the limit of fines

and dismissal, insurrection raged. A rebel could not refuse to accept the bits of business outlined for him, but he could make clear his private opinion that it was all nonsense. Miss Dow and one or two others that knew the situation stood loyally by her but she emerged from every rehearsal worn out with the mere nervous strain of opposing her will to the wills of twelve or fifteen insurgents. Some of them had a habit of making wounding remarks *sotto voce* for her benefit. Days and nights were full of trouble and the sensitive side of her nature got many a hurt.

The season began at Poughkeepsie, New York, October 29, 1888, in "Ingomar." Bridgeport and Meriden, Connecticut, followed with other one-night stands. At Meriden the attendance was slim.

"How is the house?" asked one of the recalcitrants of another.

"Bad!" said the other, with gusto. "A man and a boy." From that time on whenever the audience was small, the word went around in the hostile dressing-rooms and was repeated with joy so that Miss Marlowe could hear it, "The man and the boy from Meriden are here!"

The next engagement was in Washington, D. C., where a different condition was quickly disclosed. Meriden's knowledge of Julia Marlowe was her name on the three-sheets. Washington, in close touch with the nation, knew all about her triumphs in Chicago and the West and was aware that her appearance was a dramatic event. As was her

custom in those years, she began the week's engagement with "Ingomar." It was a distinguished company that met that night of November 6, 1888, on the spectator side of the curtain. No attempt had been made to exploit the occasion, for Miss Marlowe had an innate aversion to what are called "press agent" methods; but, of their own will, representative men and women came to see if it were really true that a new light had dawned upon the stage. Four members of the Supreme Court were there with their families; the Chinese Minister and his suite occupied one of the boxes; diplomats and men prominent in national affairs came in such numbers that half the space given next day by the press to the event must be taken with the list of "among those present."

For the first act, said the newspapers, the attitude of the audience was coldly critical and unconvinced, as who should say, "I dare you to show me that she has merit." But by the middle of the Second Act all this was gone and forgotten, and thenceforward the record of the evening was like that of the afternoon at the Bijou, and for the same reason, which was a pleased surprise. Nobody had expected that this young girl could clothe life, beauty and charm upon a play that was mostly old dry bones. It was like resuscitating a mummy.

"Ingomar" was the play for the next two nights. On Thursday night, November 9, she gave "The Hunchback," by which, the press accounts agreed she greatly deepened her hold upon Washington

playgoers. "Twelfth Night" coming next, they said it was as great a wonder and asked what further magic this capable young person had in reserve. She played out the week to full houses and departed in a halo of glory.

Scranton, Pennsylvania, was the next stop. On Sunday morning the company was gathered at the Washington railroad station waiting for the train, when Miss Marlowe arrived. She could not but observe that the attitude of the unfriendly among the players was more than ever menacing that morning. Lowering looks on all sides were her portion; several of the company pointedly omitted to notice her greeting and faced the other way. She had not read the morning newspapers and had no slightest notion of the cause of this fresh outburst of ill-will. After the train had left the station, one of the members, less hostile than others, came up and put upon her lap an opened copy of the Washington *Sunday Herald*. In the middle of an article strongly praising her the writer embodied this sentence:

But this young girl, who, after a merely nominal novitiate, seems already, among the conventional dead wood of her support, like a star of heaven fallen among faggots, is wholly of another type.

The more eloquent and pointed the plaudits for the star the more acrid was to the company the disparagement of their own work. Many of them were old-time actors, accustomed to praise instead of

blame. To be turned off now as a bunch of faggots into which a star from heaven had fallen—intolerable! The mad notion seized upon some of them that Miss Marlowe was responsible for the critic's slighting words; and, for the next few days, she walked the quarter deck facing imminent mutiny by the crew. It was easier (for her) to play *Juliet* than to deal with eleven temperamental actors nursing a grievance that was none the less poignant because it was unreal. All the resources of her womanly tact were strained to carry on. As to whether she succeeded, I may record the fact that, in the end, nearly all the rebels became her warm personal friends and champions.

After Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the company went to Brooklyn, where, on November 19, Miss Marlowe made her first appearance, playing "Ingomar." She was cheered by the presence of Colonel Ingersoll and his family, who occupied a box and came back to see her after every play. The Brooklyn press welcomed her as warmly as had the press of Washington, the *Citizen* leading off by declaring that "one sees in Miss Marlowe the promise and potency of a really great actress. It is difficult to realize at times that she is still very young in years, so nicely modeled is her art." Tuesday night she gave *Julia* in "The Hunchback" and made upon Brooklyn the impression she had scored elsewhere. This was followed by "Twelfth Night." In a long and carefully prepared review of her work, the *Standard Union* dwelt with delight upon





*Photograph by Strauss-Peyton*

*Galatea SEES HERSELF*  
(*"Pygmalion and Galatea"*)



the natural ease and noble restraint of her methods and could not recall on any stage a more beautiful vocalization than her treatment of the famous (or hackneyed) passage beginning,

Make me a willow cabin at your gate.

This seemed justly appraised, as I hope to show later.

None of Shakespeare's women is conspicuously easy to do, and *Viola*, for all its apparent simplicity of plot is among the most difficult—if one is to do anything more than to walk through it. The play itself, which seems so merry and light-hearted that it trips away to its own singing, is full of pitfalls. An actor that can get through the first scene of *Orsino* without making himself hated by all mindful auditors can probably play anything. The conflicting motifs and intricate situations of *Viola* with all her depths of character to show, are a problem at best, and to make everything worse there is no other passage of Shakespeare that has been parodied, burlesqued, and mimicked more often than her crucial speech:

A blank, my lord. She never told her love.

It would be hard enough to utter these lines of complex emotion even if they had not in the general mind come to have a comic significance. These and the next speech:

I am all the daughters of my father's house,

comprise about the whole of the vehicle with which the actress that attempts them must reveal *Viola's* real state of mind, real worth, real mentality, real being. Every word in those two speeches is fateful with significance and most of the audience is fortified against the whole of it!

Persons of any long experience with audiences and any skill in reading an audience's moods are never in doubt as to whether a work of theatrical art is really achieving its goal. Not from the applause or the lack of it; sometimes the audience most deeply moved makes the least noise; but by a certain psychological reaction difficult to define. Outwardly, when in a tense passage the people in the house sit still, a vast silence falls upon them, there is no sound of rustling in the seats but only a sense of a thousand minds intent upon one thought and a thousand bodies that hardly dare to breathe, the work on the stage is going home to the persons in the seats, it has won, it is perfect in the transference of the feeling required.

It was so that night in Brooklyn and on many succeeding occasions when I saw the portraiture of this *Viola*. The spell was plainly beginning to be laid upon the house with the broken off speech:

Ay, but I know—

The reason was plain enough. The four words conveyed, as explicitly as an oration could convey, four distinct impressions, all calculated to seize upon the attention and arouse the expectations of any audi-

ence. The secret love for *Orsino*, a suggestion that it was probably hopeless, a feeling of utter loneliness natural to untried innocence in such a position, and then the intimations of a melancholy narrative to come, and to which the *Cesario* in her rôle is leading. With such a beginning, she had all listeners intent upon her words by the time she came to those difficult and pregnant lines:

As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,  
I should your lordship,

where by the shadow of a ghost of a tone too much, one infinitesimal of an overdone stress or one wrong inflection, she might snap all the illusion by making her love too clear. And where on the other hand by the same degree of too little the state of her mind should be inadequately expressed and so all fail on that side!

*Duke.* And what's her history?

There was a pause in which it seemed her mind was struggling to keep intact its empire over itself. Then floated out over the footlights and into the great, still house a voice that did not seem so much like a voice as some kind of soft and delicate music on a theme of profound melancholy. It is a pity that we have no familiar alphabet of inflections so I might show to one that never heard this *Viola* the accent she placed on the pivotal word "concealment." It was what the elocutionists call the falling circumflex, but it was also more than that. In rather

a slow tempo, to indicate that here was something of moment, she said it so as to bring home to the soul of every listener a possessing reminder of the concealment she herself must practise.

*Olivia.* Why, what would you?

*Viola.* Make me a willow cabin at your gate,  
And call upon my soul within the house;  
Write loyal cantons of contemned love  
And sing them loud, even in the dead of night;  
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,  
And make the babbling gossip of the air  
Cry out—Olivia!

All this in that wonderful liquid legato of hers, and faultless. She is the only person I have ever heard in the spoken drama that could venture upon the perilous seas of the legato and run no risk of shipwreck on the singsong or the whine, while she lost not an iota of the human quality in her speech. The climax, "Cry out—Olivia!" is the reef on which most of them pile up. Not this one. The vocal control was so remarkable that I have ventured to notate the pivotal (and usually fatal) word as she uttered it. Thus:



This may indicate in some degree what she did with all those vowel sounds. So cried, the word had the notes of piteous appeal and fervent love, and



one was reminded that this was an advocate, sincere if unwilling, pleading a suit whose validity she knew because she had a similar suit she would feign make elsewhere for herself!

It was set down then that the close sympathy and underlying note of sadness that she touched into these scenes she maintained even in the comic passages. We laughed at the stricken dismay with which she received *Sir Andrew's* challenge, the eyes wide open, staring with astonishment, the dropped chin, the mouth a little opened, the voice gone quite dry and uncontrollable with terror, but all the time we laughed we had as much sense of pity as of amusement. Even in the comic Duel Scene it was so, even when with eyes and head averted she made that ludicrous blind stab into the air, pity and sympathy were still in all the laughter. The initial impression had been too deep, the hold upon the listener's spirit was too real; *Viola* had appeared at the first a human being overshadowed with a destiny; so she remained consistently to the end.

Something else the critics noted that night and often thereafter. The last analysis of the impressions she wrought with her perfection of accent and utterance was something spiritual, not material; spiritual, elusive, but still strangely powerful. One of the best of my critical colleagues was wont to insist that the art of this *Viola* must always in the end leave something defiant to the analyst because it was so ethereal he could put no adequate name upon it.

The next week the company moved to the

Amphion Academy, a large theater in the Williamsburg or Eastern District of Brooklyn, and far enough away to seem like another city. While she was playing there Nym Crinkle took occasion to write some sarcastic comments on Colonel Ingersoll's Shakespearean enthusiasms. Naturally; for could there be anything good about an infidel? Thereupon, Miss Marlowe received the following letter:

400 Fifth Avenue,  
Nov. 26, '88

My dear Miss Marlowe:

I just read Mr. Crinkle's article in the *World*. It will do you great good. It will make you a thousand friends. I am perfectly willing to have him "yawp" at me. He makes me smile. After you left last night, the girls told me that Mr. Bailey said something that touched you a little. Do not mind these people. Let the stupid and the envious and the "too smart" have their say while you go on your own way. They cannot injure you. In a little while they will all swear that they always said that you were the greatest actress in the world.

All send regards to you and "Aunt Ada."

Yours always,  
R. G. INGERSOLL.

It was about this time that as a result of fortuities to be told later in this story, I became connected with one phase of the venture in the classic drama and assumed the work that brought to me unusual opportunities to observe and note Miss Marlowe's art and its progress.

The next city visited was Boston, the scholastic, the critical, beginning Monday, December 3, 1888, at the Hollis Street Theater in "Ingomar." The production was arranged with incidental music. As *Parthenia* starts upon the threadbare old lines, "Two souls" and so on, the orchestra was to begin low strumming to a soft and dreamy air,—lum, tum, lum, tum, tum, tum, and the rest. When *Parthenia* reached that point that first night, she gave the usual cue, but there was no response from the musicians and she had to repeat the lines and make her quick exit from the stage without the time-honored assistant to emotional tremors. The leader of the Hollis Street orchestra was John Melally, an excellent musician and good man. In a few moments he appeared before the star, crestfallen and remorseful.

"I have to apologize," he said. "It is the first time such a thing ever happened to me. I was so much engrossed in watching you that I forgot the music, the cue, and everything else."

"Success, instant, and unqualified," was the verdict of the Boston press. The newspapers said she had done a rare thing; she had caught at once the sympathy of a typically cold and critical Boston first-night audience, caught it "and never let it go until the end."

She held it with increasing power throughout the week. The ledger tells the tale. After she had done her *Julia* with all her artistic heart, the Boston *Globe* was moved to print a leading editorial about her. It said:

The world theatrical has long been waiting for the appearance of just such a star as she promises to be.

Miss Marlowe's acting is charming. Some one has said that there is poetry in her every tone and movement, or words to that effect, and that somebody came near to speaking the truth. . . .

Great is art and Julia Marlowe is already one of its charming prophets. Unlike some of art's priestesses she knows acting from posturing, elocution from mouthing, art from millinery. The *Globe's* compliments and congratulations to this new and shining star.

The next afternoon, December 7, she appeared at a benefit, playing an act from "Ingomar," and the *Herald*, too, deemed the occasion important enough for editorial comment. Under the title of "The New American Actress" it said that Miss Marlowe was a surprise to many and an object of admiration to all. It then went on to renew the comment about her that has been noted as first appearing in Brooklyn and must have been in the thinkings of thousands of persons that had seen her. "Her charm," it said, "is the charm of spirituality much more than of a sensuous quality." She had a hold, also, on the immediate interest of her audiences. "There is always a sympathetic curiosity to see what she will do next." It concluded that "if Miss Marlowe fulfills her present promise, she is the most important acquisition for several years to the American stage."

She tried out her *Juliet* in scholarly Boston on Friday night, repeated it Saturday afternoon and was gratified by an unequivocal response. The week

had been the best in her career. Night after night the attendance had mounted; on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday she played to the capacity of the house and standing-room—the first time she had risen to that round of professional eminence. She felt that the Boston audiences understood and honored her *Juliet*. So did the critics, although some of these thought it lacked the dynamics they were used to and were puzzled by her attitude toward revered point-making. Indeed, *cave canum* was the invisible sign over many a sanctum in those days. Into our sacred preserves come not with novelty.

Some also furnished other unpremeditated occasions for entertainment. There is a fashion in criticism as in everything else; a fashion, and a beloved set of formulas religiously observed for a season and then forgotten. In Miss Marlowe's case the fashion was to remark that all she lacked was Experience and conclude sagely that this potent mistress would do Wonders for her. Having transacted which, formulas invariably became dumb or the oracle ceased from its labors, I know not which, for no one ever indicated what these marvels thus darkly foreshadowed were to be.

Weekly newspapers and magazines were then of great influence in Boston. All maintained elaborate departments of dramatic news and review, and it is a sufficient sign of what this young girl already meant to Boston that all surrendered the greater part of their dramatic pages that week to studious summaries of her work. Boston, according

to these authorities, had taken her to its arms and thenceforth she was sure of its best welcome in anything she might essay.

Among the letters she received this week were the following:

28 Rutland Square,  
Boston  
Tuesday Eve., Dec. 4.

Dear Miss Marlowe:

I was indebted to the courtesy of your agent for the pleasure of seeing you last evening—and then I was indebted to you for some hours of very real enjoyment. I should be indeed ungrateful if I should fail to acknowledge my debt with sincerest thanks. I have never liked any *Parthenia* so much, though I have seen many; and the play of “Ingomar” is one of my earliest theatrical recollections.

What a lovely *Viola* you will be! I feel sure that you have a brilliant future awaiting you; and please believe that by no one will your career be watched with more sympathetic interest than by

Yours very sincerely,  
LOUIS CHANDLER MOULTON.

Studio, 41 Tremont Street,  
Boston, December 5, '88.

Dear Miss Marlowe:

I want to say to you how much we have enjoyed your pure and beautiful rendering of the characters of *Parthenia* and *Julia*. Your acting is a lovely revelation the memory of which will ever remain a source of pleasure. I had never expected to see the realization of my ideal, but you have ex-



ceeded it, and I thank you for the unalloyed pleasure which you have given both Mrs. Brackett and myself.

I fully endorse all my dear friend Ingersoll has said of you and had I his powers of expression I would add a thousandfold to it.

Be steadfast in your ideal. It is perfect and will surely guide you to success and win for you all that your heart can ask for.

Faithfully yours,

WALTER M. BRACKETT.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CONQUEST OF PHILADELPHIA



ER Boston engagement was productive of an incident that illustrates the peculiar and almost hypnotic power that all unconsciously she exerted upon some persons.

That first night when she opened in "Ingomar," there was observed sitting in the front row of the orchestra seats an elderly gentleman that had long before lost, let us say, his youthful figure. The company soon had reason to note him with interest if not good-will, for when Miss Marlowe was not on the stage he slept and when he slept he snored—snored as one plays the *E* flat trombone. By some magical intuition, he seemed to wake up as soon as *Parthenia* entered and to follow her work with uncommon delight, leading the applause with such vigor that the envious suggested a claque. When she had disappeared into the wings, behold him there, again asleep, again snoring.

The next night and throughout the week he was in the same seat in the front row, behaving exactly as before. Even at the poor old "Lady of Lyons," even when "Ingomar" was repeated, there he sat,

alternately applauding and slumbering (with snores) to the speechless indignation and disgust of the support and the amusement of the star. She quite forgot the circumstance until another year she returned to Boston, when she was astonished to see the same man overflowing the same seat in the same front row and still sleeping and waking as before. The months had neither weakened his enthusiasm nor mellowed his trombone. Throughout the engagement he appeared at every play, new or old. The third time Miss Marlowe visited Boston her manager became interested in this phenomenon and sought the acquaintance of the persistent visitor. He proved to be Mr. Frederick French, a most respectable business man, who at once admitted that the playing of Julia Marlowe was the only thing that now interested him in the theater. The manager took him back upon the stage at the close of a performance and introduced him to the admired being whose work had exerted all this wizard spell. Once there he was almost as shy and reticent as she was and fled after a mumbled word or two, never to return to that part of the theater. But, every night, year after year, new plays and old, modern or classical, he continued to be in the same seat in the front row, to awake to pleasure and applause when Miss Marlowe appeared and relapse into sleep and snoring while the others performed. When he died a few years later he was found to have been the possessor of a notable collection of Marloweana. With research he had gathered every available

photograph of his favorite actress and every floating newspaper article about her.

A new phase of life might easily have opened to her with her new-fledged glory in Boston, for she began to be sought for social entertainments and tea fights and the like. This is the inevitable thing; the lioness and the hunter. In this instance the chase was brief and without trophies. She absolutely refused to be exploited in the parlor as in the press. She had adopted a rule that she would not be interviewed and would not give to the public any details about her life or ideas. In almost the words of Stevenson she said that the public was interested in the artist's work but not in the artist.

The virtue was stern and, from a business point of view, had no reward. To every application for an interview she sent downstairs the stereotyped answer, "Miss Marlowe has nothing to say to the public." The result was that she sowed among inconsiderate writers a crop of resentment that sometimes bore unexpected fruit; but the little woman was inexorable. "The public has a perfectly legitimate right to know about my work, but can have no interest in me," she insisted. As a by-product of this course, there had begun to appear curiously ingenious accounts of her life and career wherein opulent invention took the place of fact and where details of birthplace and early experiences were supplied for her with a facility that left her speechless with amazement. She never took the trouble to correct any of these fables and some of them contin-

ued for years to be resurrected serviceably from the "morgues" of newspaper offices.

It was not from any ill will or lack of courtesy that she shut herself from access; she had little time for personal exploitation and still less liking. She was still by far the busiest person in the enterprise. It is a fact attested by all that knew anything of her real life that in these years she never relaxed her study. Her reasons may be viewed as lighting up her character. In the first place, whatever critics might say, she was far from satisfied with any of her portrayals. She knew better than anybody else where they fell short of her ideals and she was laboring to bring them to her standard. It was remarked by those that followed her that she never played the same part twice in precisely the same way, though it was not usually known that she was varying her interpretation because she was always seeking new light upon it. The other reason was that she was almost contemptuously dissatisfied with the range of parts she had taken. Her ambition, conceived when she was packing crackers or tapping a telegraph key, was to play every great female character of Shakespeare. For months now she had been preparing herself in *Rosalind* as her next piece of portrait work, and before the company reached Boston she was calling daily rehearsals in "As You Like It." She knew well enough that if she was to succeed in a character so complex and difficult she would have no time for tea parties and social fadge-fadge.

After Boston came New England towns, Brockton, Haverhill, Springfield, Waterbury, New Haven, Providence. Waterbury was one of the places she had visited in the two weeks' tour of April, 1887, when she was being tried out. It gave her now a different reception.

Christmas week, 1888, saw her in Philadelphia and dawned without a sign of cheer, but only a promise of imminent disaster. She was beset with every disadvantage. She had never before played in the city which, if it had heard of her, straightway forgot her very name. Let Waterbury be informed from Boston, and Washington from New York, Philadelphia must learn for itself; it takes no tutelage from another metropolis. The only theater that could be secured was a third-rate house given over to cheap melodrama, "The Dark Secret," "Bertha, the Sewing-Machine Girl," and cheaper vaudeville. The entertainment that the week before had elevated its stage bore the title of "Terry, the Swell," and seemed to have had something to do with the life of a prize-fighter. The step from this classic to the blank verse of "Ingomar" was so great that the bulk of the playgoing element in Philadelphia refused to accept it as possible in nature; a thing not astonishing in view of the fact that most of them had never heard of the existence of the stage which the new star was to lighten.

Through the peek-hole of the drop curtain of that great barn that night, Miss Marlowe's friends in the company looked with dismay and her enemies





*Photograph by White*

*Rosalind*



with exultation. The man and boy from Meriden were there, and scarcely anybody else. The total receipts were \$67, contributed by persons so scattered about the place that it looked virtually empty. It is recorded from more than one source that the young star went through her part unflattered by this rare confluence of troubles. She played exactly as if the house had been full and next day had her triumph in the newspapers; for as usual she conquered the critics. Astonishment struck hard upon all these gentlemen; whether they had gone forth expecting to see an actress worthy of "Terry, the Swell," is speculative, but evidently they had not looked for anything like this.

The next night, Christmas, one of the worst nights in the year for all theaters, she played "Twelfth Night," and, singularly enough, drew the first "bad notice" she had received anywhere. It was written by George Rogers, critic for the *North American*, who did not like the *Viola* that Miss Marlowe played, and said so. The best that could be said of it, he thought, was that it was "earnest, intelligent, and sympathetic." But he held she needed to study the character much more closely. In his opinion "the high spirit, the piquant brightness, the elements of humor which form so large a part of *Viola's* charm and give to the character its peculiar distinctiveness appear entirely to have escaped her notice." He thought she made an obviously feminine page and the impersonation was not free from fault even from Miss Marlowe's own

point of view, for "the sentiment was strained and the appeal to the sympathies of the spectator" was too direct. *Viola's* words, he thought, are so exquisitely sad and so tenderly moving as to need little emphasis, while Miss Marlowe gave them much, and he concluded that she had laid aside the artlessness, the simplicity, and the restraint that were "so notable and excellent a feature of her *Parthenia*." Yet, he said that "there was much that was agreeable and excellent and praiseworthy in Miss Marlowe's impersonation and, all things considered, it must be considered as very creditable and promising."

This may be, as palliative.

He was alone in his unfavorable judgment; conspicuously alone. All the other critics viewed this *Viola* as the public plainly had viewed it, calling it tender, powerful, thoughtful, the work of a student and an accomplished artist. They all liked her *Julia*; even George Rogers surrendered to that great piece of work; and the audiences had grown with her fame.

The first week ended under the happiest auspices in spite of the bad theater and the ghost of "Terry, the Swell." On Monday, the last night of 1888, when she gave "Romeo and Juliet," the house was filled.

The managing editor of the *Public Ledger* wrote himself the review for that journal and, before he went home, enclosed a copy of it to Miss Marlowe, with whom he was not at that time acquainted. He wrote:

Dear Madam:

I enclose you this, not because it has any real value, as no notice of the play written between the fall of the green curtain and the first revolution of the press can have any such value, but because I wish to correct a couple of most stupid blunders in it for which I am not responsible. Perhaps you may care to know that one of the oldest of playgoers and dramatic critics of Philadelphia, one who has seen all the great *Juliets* of our stage for thirty-five years believes he saw in yours of last night the promise of excellence. He begs leave to greet you at the beginning of that which should be an honorable and great career.

Respectfully your friend and servant,

L. CLARKE DAVIS.

All the reviews were in the same vein, the *Bulletin* alone being a little hesitant. It concluded that Miss Marlowe's inexperience denied a complete realization of her rôle, but granted her unusual impressiveness in the dramatic and tragic passages.

This reminds me that many years after, I called Miss Marlowe's attention to the fact that at the beginning many critics used to think her *Juliet* was lacking in passion.

"Why, yes," she said, "I remember. Many persons in those days were accustomed to think that passion was synonymous with noise. It was the habit, or had been, to try to express feelings in shouts or shrieks. I had no fault to find with writers that had been trained in this school, but it was one that I could never venture upon. Then, again, I knew there were many excellent critics and sincere

men to whom it had never occurred that a woman of *Juliet's* character might have a passion white-hot in its intensity and still be too fine of nature, and of thought too exalted, to show it in one look or gesture or tone that would be inconsistent with her immaculate purity of soul. But I had much rather play her as she seemed to me and have all the critics dissatisfied with it than play it so that they liked it and feel that I had departed from my conviction about her."

The entire theatrical world of America was now observing with vivid interest the rise of this remarkable innovator upon stage traditions. Because of their own work, actors have not often the chance to see the performances of their fellows. This week in Philadelphia her manager received the following letter:

Colonnade Hotel,  
Philadelphia,  
December 28, 1888.

Dear Mr. Barney:

Cannot you persuade Miss Marlowe to give a professional matinée? Our company are quite as crazy to see her as we are, and if you can persuade the little lady to do so, all the good people of our calling now in Philadelphia will be equally delighted.

With best wishes, believe me,

Sincerely yours, &c.,

ROBSON AND CRANE.

Miss Marlowe would have been glad to comply with this if there had been an opportunity.



*Juliet* continued to be played to increasing houses until Thursday night, January 3, 1889, when, for the first time, Miss Marlowe appeared as *Rosalind* in "As You Like It," which the company had been rehearsing for weeks. Rehearsals with this company were quite out of the ordinary and of a nature that gave a stage-manager little to do. As we have noted, it was Miss Marlowe's fixed habit to make her own prompt-book for every play in which she appeared—"prompt-book" seeming a lame term for the documents she produced. Besides marking all the emphases she wrote on the page margins every item of business for each character, so that every player knew for every moment he was on the stage exactly what he was to do and where he was to stand. She had worked this all out with daily study over her lay figures, placing them here and there as she recited the lines and entering her directions on the margin when she had settled upon the best pictures. All this time Miss Dow was still with her and usually took direct charge of the stage, but Miss Marlowe created or chose the chief items of business, shaping them to her own conception of play or passage.

She had been a long time pondering *Rosalind* as one of the most intractable (upon the modern stage) of all Shakespeare's women and yet one that she loved and loved to do. Some of the perplexities of *Rosalind* are obvious even to the lay mind. The practical-working of the device of a disguise that is pretended to fool the persons of the drama while it must never so fool the audience, is

one of these problems. Less sophisticated and more fervid Elizabethans were more easily handled. In our time, the deception must be made to seem plausible and convincing and yet be no deception at all, and genius itself is strained to meet such requirements. There is also an incessant struggle between the playing motives in any effective *Rosalind*; to reveal her love to the audience and yet to conceal it from too open inspection by *Orlando*. The one line, "Young man, you have wrestled well and overthrown more than your enemies," may be with the best intentions so uttered as to annihilate all the finer significance of the rest of the play. Eternal vigilance is the price of this part; the *Rosalind* that wins has watched her every syllable. The famous "Woo me, woo me," scene must be touched with infinite pains. To be a girl, and act like a boy impersonating a girl, and not too much of a girl (and not too much of a boy) yet enough to make the deceiving of *Orlando* seem well founded at once and still perfectly understood—this has proved beyond the power of a hundred *Rosalinds* that in looks and general intelligence were adorable.

To the player-artist, also, who sees all kinds of things never perceived by the layman, the construction of the play includes appalling difficulties. In substance, tenor, significance, motive, the scenes in the forest are almost identical. There were no stars in Shakespeare's day, and no actresses, or he would never have constructed the play in this fashion. To make, by changes in tone, vivacity, tempo, emphasis,

the similar scenes seem fresh and different and interesting, called forth all of Miss Marlowe's most studious effort. She would not attempt the piece until she felt sure of it; she could not feel sure of it until she had settled in her mind the key of every word and the business of every moment. She had made for herself a little code of rules astonishingly adult for one of her years. One of them was "Leave nothing to chance." Perhaps it was not so wonderful as it appears, for she had stood in the wings and marked the marring of many good scenes by the lack of preparation. She knew that many actors believed in allowing leeway for the inspiration of the moment as to what the business should be. That might do for others, but for her she had no faith without works.

Apparently she was now firmly fixed in the favorable attention of Philadelphia, for it was a great and notable audience that came that night to view her first *Rosalind*. The dingy old home of "Terry, the Swell" seemed transformed. The piece went from the beginning with marvelous smoothness; the diligent rehearsals and the well-thumbed prompt-book had not been in vain.

For once, the press was unanimous and unreserved. Not a critic could find or suggest a flaw. The specter of Experience with the Mystic Things it had yet to teach the young actress fled from every sanctum in the city. It appeared that by this time the novice had nothing to learn; she was the ideal *Rosalind*, perfect, superb, commanding. She had

them all at her feet; even the reluctant George Rogers of the *North American*, he that had not liked *Viola*, came with the rest, bearing poetic gems.

"It was so sweet, so tender, so gentle," he said of *Rosalind*, "so refined in method, so pure in feeling, so elevated in spirit; it was illuminated with such lambent humor, irradiated with such piquant, captivating grace, animated by such innocent and artless gaiety and softened with so true a note of pathos that those that went to make allowances for expected deficiencies remained to wonder at its beauties, and the audience followed its course from first to last with a demonstrative delight."

The venerable editor of the *Public Ledger* went to the unusual length of adding his independent tribute. She played "As You Like It" again at the Saturday matinée and the next day received this letter:

Saturday,  
Public Ledger Building,  
S. W. Corner 6th and Chestnut Streets,  
Philadelphia.

My Dear Miss Marlowe:

Mr. Drexel and I were charmed with your *Rosalind* this afternoon.

You have everything in your favor, and it will be your own fault if you are not, in the near future, one of the very great actresses of the age. Make up your mind that you *will*, and with your good aunt's appreciative backing you must be.

With cordial regards, sincerely your friend,

GEO. W. CHILDS.

On January 5th, the *Evening Bulletin* published an editorial on Miss Marlowe's work in which it gave her unstinted praise, concluding with these words:

It is particularly pleasant to say these things voluntarily in view of the fact that, unlike most other aspirants for dramatic laurels, she has not been the object of systematic and organized puffery, and because nothing has been said in her behalf by those that are responsible for her management that has not been abundantly justified by her own good work.

The next day, January 6th, the *Philadelphia Times* printed an editorial entitled "Artists Born and Made," in which it said:

A handful of old theatergoers met at the Broad Street Theater on Monday night of last week, dragged there only by a stern professional duty and expecting to be bored by one more schoolgirl exhibition in "Ingomar."

But the fair *Parthenia* had not spoken ten lines before the unemotional auditors looked at one another in surprise. In the work of the two weeks that have since passed, Miss Marlowe has established her claim to this title—not by her personal charm alone, though that is undeniable; nor by her skill, for, though her training has been good, her technical powers necessarily are not yet matured; but by those unmistakable signs of dramatic appreciation, of poetic sentiment, of unaffected grace and fine feeling, that are the unpurchasable gifts wherewith the artists only are endowed.

In their weekly reviews of the stage the critics were untiring in their praise of this "newly risen star."

"She came, she was seen, she conquered," was the terse summing up of the *Sunday World*. The paraphrase seemed nothing extravagant. Philadelphia was so truly hers that the people went to the strange step of getting up, of their own motion, a petition to Manager Barney to prolong the stay of the company. There was nothing at the barn-like theater that week. Mr. Barney had a week's bookings in the West. These he canceled, not without some losses, and Julia Marlowe was announced for another week in Philadelphia. She repeated "The Hunchback" Monday night and played "The Lady of Lyons" Tuesday. The other performances were of "Romeo and Juliet," "Ingomar" and closing Saturday with "Twelfth Night." She began in Philadelphia with \$67 in the house; at her last performance the receipts were more than \$1,400, all the money the house could take in at the prevailing prices.

She did even more than that. She had drawn to the dingy old temple of burlesque and of "Terry, the Swell" the most intelligent and discriminating persons in Philadelphia, who sat night after night in a most incongruous place to listen to her artistry. The fact commanded attention from other managers. A skilled and highly reputable firm took over the Broad Street, refurbished it, gave it a line of dignified entertainments and it became the most fashionable theater in Philadelphia.

An interesting feature of this Philadelphia engagement was that it secured for her the unreserved



approval and lifelong friendship of Dr. Furness, the editor and compiler of the great *Variorum* Shakespeare and the foremost Shakespearean of his time. With his daughter he came to every performance. Some time after she had left Philadelphia, she received this letter from Miss Furness:

(No date.)

My Dear Miss Marlowe:

You see I remain true to my promise of writing first. We have not yet stopped talking about how charming you made our lunch two Sundays ago.

I am afraid I can tell you nothing that can interest you but I shall try my best.

A doctor, Dr. McClelland, dined with us last night and told how, last winter, coming home tired, the Broad Street Theater tempted him to stop for a moment. You were playing "As You Like it" and, after seeing one act through, he rushed home and got his wife to hurry on her things and together they went back for the last act! They returned home charmed and have not yet ceased to talk about it as the loveliest play and actress they ever saw.

Very sincerely yours,

CAROLINE A. FURNESS.

Among the letters of that week came also this:

Chickies, Pa.,

Dec. 31, 1888.

Miss Marlowe:

I am an old theatergoer at home and abroad. Last week I saw you in "Ingomar" and I haven't words to express my astonishment and delight! I forgot that you were acting! Your manager must take you to London, where your suc-

cess will be as great as, or greater than, Mary Anderson's and you will have a chance to expand. You are too young to remain here, where you are obliged to rush from city to city. The work is too hard and the fatigue and excitement will sooner or later tell upon you, physically and mentally. Don't undertake too much. We can't afford to lose you! Mme. Modjeska and her husband, Count Bozenta Clapowski, look upon me as one of their best friends in America and they could and would, I know, assist you with their experience in London. The Count is highly connected in England and his wife's success there was very great indeed. Anything I could do through them I would do with great pleasure. And now you must forgive this note, as I am old enough to be your father, and only desire to see you do great credit to our country.

Yours very truly,

PARIS HALDEMAN.

P. S. If you can take time for a recreation, go to the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts and see a full length portrait of Modjeska painted for me some years ago by Carolus Duran in Paris and which I presented to that institution. It is the only work of his in America that I know of.

Four weeks of travel followed in which the company visited Sandusky, Dayton, Louisville, Milwaukee, and other centers. So far as press eulogies were concerned, insatiable ambition could not have craved more; but for all the chorus of praise, business was often bad. The man and the boy from Meriden sometimes reappeared; at Sandusky with nobody else to speak of. Expenses and salaries

are not to be met on such terms. The larger the city the happier the audience, was the rule; I do not know why. She seemed to be emphatically for metropolitan consideration. Wherever the company stayed more than one night the attendance boomed up on the second night; sometimes even to capacity. This fact she held to be better than much gold.

On February 11, 1889, she started upon her second engagement in Chicago. In a year the whole situation had changed for her. She now played in the best theater in the city; it was crowded every night; the critics were of but one opinion concerning her genius and worth. Mr. Barron in the *Inter Ocean* recanted about *Viola* and now found it admirable. He even said that in one particular it excelled the *Viola* of the lamented Adelaide Neilson, so long held to be incomparable. Julia Marlowe's superiority, he held, was in poetic temperament; about which he hymned her *Viola* as distinguished by a "sweet, winsome, dainty grace." Her *Rosalind* he declared to be delightful "by reason of its frank simplicity, natural freshness and its gentle dignity, rather than because of any brilliancy or dash that may be noted in her treatment of the character." And, again, "However carefully she may have studied the part with a view to defining her mental analysis of it, it is evident that no amount of preparation could have fitted Miss Marlowe to portray the character as she seems to portray it. The character has absorbed her and her work is its synthesis, not its analysis."

After a highly successful week in Chicago, she returned to Boston to play a second engagement there in one season, an unusual course for any actress. But the management quickly showed that it had judged wisely of Boston's attitude. The *Traveler*, commenting the next day on the crowded house and reechoing applause that greeted her, said that her reception was in an almost ridiculous contrast with that of a few weeks before, when, unknown and unheralded, she had knocked at the door. That week she showed to Boston her *Rosalind* and Boston understood and wholly approved of it. Simultaneously, she arrived at another distinction. Her performance was a news event; the New York journals had special telegrams about it. The *World* correspondent reported that she had "achieved a wonderful success"; the *Times* said that "calm, critical, cultured Boston had been captured by her and her audiences had grown to enormous size." The *Boston Herald, Globe*, and *Post* printed editorials on her and her work: the *Times* man said that "her name to-night is on the lips of everybody."

This, then, was the situation in which she stood. In her twenty-third year, before she had completed her second season as a star, she was acknowledged to be more than a great actress; to be the foremost, ablest and most accomplished of all American interpreters of Shakespeare's women. The fact had won wide recognition that she was a student, following a grave, dignified, and worthy purpose, entirely aside from any monetary returns. It had

been seen that she was not an experiment, a clever adventurer for temporary honors on the stage, nor even a high-spirited girl gratifying an ambition. She was of a deliberated and persistent aim; she had thought deeply about her work and its significance. Hence she had planned no dash in the face of fortune, but a life devoted to serious art. All critics had agreed that she indulged in no tricks, had no affectations, resorted to no devices, cherished an obvious respect for the dignity of her calling. It was no longer the practice to predict for her a great career; the press writers saw that she had already entered upon it and that, given health and strength, whatever she might do thereafter would have a place in the history of art.

That she was becoming to the public something more than an actress, that she was thought of now as a woman of significance and a message, was shown by the great increase in the number of letters she received daily from persons she had never known. Three samples from the sheaf of this week may show what this meant:

Dear Miss Marlowe:

It is not nice, I know, to send flowers to you when I do not know you but I am so fascinated by you that I cannot resist the temptation. I am only thirteen years old and yet I can appreciate your wonderful genius in acting. You seem to me like an old friend so often have I seen you on the stage. I am infatuated with you as *Parthenia* and as *Julia* and as *Rosalind* and today, after seeing your performance of *Galatea*, I could not resist the temptation of sending these

few flowers. Another thing which I thought lovely of you was that you refused the flowers thrown you and gave them to Miss Shaw. I was in one of the boxes. Hoping you will wear these flowers for an ardent admirer's sake, with best wishes for the future I am,

Yours respectfully,

---

(No signature).

This next suggestion aroused some amused curiosity, but she never knew who sent it:

Boston, Feb. 22, '89.

Miss Julia Marlowe,  
Park Theater.

You will excuse me. I witnessed your performance last evening with rare pleasure, as many others will also admit, but please do not say "I hate you, Helen." No matter what the text—anything said after "I hate you" detracts from the force of the "explosion." The worst I ever heard, "Oh! Helen, I hate you! Helen!" (Mather) The best "Helen! ! (short pause) "I hate you!" (Mrs. Bowers).

Yours,

PARQUETTE.

Similarly, she never knew who "Susie" was, but greatly esteemed her unpretentious tribute:

(no date)

My dear Miss Marlowe:

When papa was talking about you the other day he said that he thought you were soon to be at least Miss Adelaide Neilson in acting, but he hoped you would be her superior in behavior. If she was bad I am sure you will. He also



said that he sincerely hoped that you would never marry. If all he said about actresses being unhappy always when they do is true I hope so too. I love you and don't want you to be unhappy so please don't.

Your aff. friend

SUSIE.

From Boston the company moved again toward the West, playing in Syracuse, Buffalo, Wheeling, West Virginia and so to new fields. Even on the moving trains she continued to study. Since Philadelphia, she had been preparing *Beatrice* in "Much Ado About Nothing" and *Imogen* in "Cymbeline." When that season ended, still engrossed with new projects, she accepted an invitation from the Ingersolls to spend the summer with them at their Far Rockaway cottage and, with the beginning of that experience, a new existence opened to her vision.

## CHAPTER X

### THE HOME OF A SHAKESPEAREAN



THE world has been strangely slow to recognize the life, mind, services, and character of Robert G. Ingersoll. In its own wise way, while he lived, it was content to discredit him on the reasonable ground that any man doubtful of the perfect authenticity of the Scriptures must be of wicked ways and dissolute habits. Many good souls that had never read a line he had written nor heard a word from his lips, that knew no more about him than they knew of the Ahkund of Swat, denounced him as a rampant atheist and consequently a low-browed ruffian. Probably he was a murderer; anyway, he must be a burglar or a porch-climber. Even of those able to cognize the difference between atheism and agnosticism many could hardly repress a shudder at the mention of his name and ever looked hopefully for some good story of his utter depravity. By this time we should be emancipated from these kindergarten processes and acknowledge that, whatever he may have thought about the Bible, there was no man of his times of a higher standard of personal morals and no home wherein the atmosphere, spirit-

ual and intellectual, was purer and nobler than in his.

Every one privileged to enter his unusual household knew this. Kindness reigned there! unpremeditated, unstudied, instinctive and invariable kindness. It seemed to have open arms to all the world and a heart that no disappointment could chill. The gloss of mankind's assumed and practised courtesy is one thing; what ruled the Ingersoll home was all different. What moved to courtesy there was a vast, unconquerable, tireless good-will, as genuine as pure gold and elsewhere somewhat rarer.

The talk around that family board was always remarkable; the place seemed so big it dwarfed all trivialities and so high neither meanness nor selfishness could so much as climb up to peep in. There persons talked not about themselves and their sad troubles around the bargain counters of life but always of something to do with literature, art, or history. I seem to be dealing in impossible romance—life is not so led, you say. Indeed, what I relate here is but fact easily attested. These persons talked about such things because they did not care to talk about anything else. One reason was that Ingersoll himself presided and flashed on every subject the peculiar light of a mind that could illumine almost any subject on earth and make it seem attractive. It was a mind singularly tolerant as well as singularly potent; he welcomed views that differed from his own. His children he encouraged to take nothing for granted and nothing on his

judgment. All things they were to search out for themselves. "It is far better to think wrong than not to think at all," was one of his mottoes, and while he usually started or led the conversation he never monopolized it.

His own schooling had been as meager as that of the little actress his roof now sheltered; but he had been so diligent and laborious a student that he had covered the whole range of men's activities and records. His natural gift of memory amounted to almost a prodigy and systematic exercise had so developed it that he was constantly astonishing even those that knew him well by bringing fresh ore from an apparently inexhaustible mine. Some of his attainments were plainly native and intuitive. He was without technical training in music, for instance, but I have heard him talk analytically of the art of Beethoven with a grasp of its technical aspects at which I was never done marveling. He was himself a poet (*nascitur*) and knew with the loving intimacy of a fellow-craftsman all the works of all the great poets of his language. The popular form into which he cast his lectures and his unusual fund of humor created among those that did not know him an impression of superficiality or burlesque. In truth, there was no other man of his time of a more solid and serious foundation, and it will be news to many outside of his own profession that in any catalogue of the really great lawyers of his time his name always appeared among the first ten.

I have mentioned his standing as a Shakespearean.

His tea-table talk, on any phase of Shakespeare's work, talk spontaneous, unpremeditated, brilliant, and genuine, was always interwoven with such a wealth of citation, illustration, and quoted opinion that it reminded one of the best that had ever been said of Coleridge in the like employments. Of any of the plays he could make in a casual way, as in an after-dinner *conversazione*, a critical exegesis as searching, as scholarly, as one of Schlegel's. He was among the few men I have met that could tell offhand and in detail differences between the first folio and the quarto of 1602. He could recite whole plays from memory and give as he went along the readings of mooted passages suggested by learned authorities and then show why most of them were wrong.

Next to Shakespeare he loved Shelley, Burns, and Keats. About these he would discourse while he and his hearers equally lost track of time; he in his theme and they in the strong magic of his spoken style. He had mastered the difficult art of reading poetry so as to bring out all its meaning without singsonging it and without bludgeoning it into prose; and, having a voice of extraordinary sweetness and compass, to hear him recite such a poem as Shelley's deathless "Skylark" was like listening to rare music.

Coming from the stage into this household, the young actress found herself in a place of wonders. Colonel Ingersoll went every morning to his office in New York; after his return in the evening, the family symposium never flagged for the next three

hours. The intellectual stimulus was electric. One night the Colonel began:

"When Giordano Bruno was about to be burned in Rome—"

"Giordano Bruno?" said Julia Marlowe to herself. "Who was Giordano Bruno? I never before heard the mention of his name."

It appeared that Colonel Ingersoll was a kind of biographer of the man. He knew all about him, where he had lived and what he had taught and how he had been condemned and how and where he had been put to death, with illuminating facts about the persons that had hounded him to the fire. Bruno suggested Rome and Rome suggested Italy of the Middle Ages and Italy of the Middle Ages suggested Machiavelli and the Colonel brought from his arsenal a collection of little-known facts about that singular genius. Machiavelli would suggest the Cenci and the Cenci would suggest Shelley and when bedtime came the family would be discussing "The Cloud," the Colonel having recited part of it. There was no pedantry about it, no affectation and no compulsion. These people talked about "The Cloud" because "The Cloud" seemed to them the best thing in the world to talk about.

Ingersoll's well-known gift of epigrammatic utterance he never husbanded for platform use, as a smaller man would have hoarded it. When he spoke of the poets, he would sum them up in a sentence of pith and wait for the verdict of the table. Thus



of Pope he said that he was an artificer, not an artist—a maker of paper flowers that sometimes, at a distance, seemed almost natural until one noticed that they had no fragrance; of Milton that everybody admired him and nobody read him; and of Young that he was a metrical narcotic. Speaking of Coleridge once, he said: "I suppose if anybody showed him an egg instantly the air was full of feathers." Of Shelley he said: "He is a kind of high priest that marries into a perfect harmony words whose affinity no other man had discovered."

I should think shame thus to draw back the curtain and show the most intimate private life of my friends if something of the kind were not necessary to explain the development of the mind we are following and if the world had not been so much misled about Ingersoll. Into this household given over to Shakespeare and good-will, the young Shakespearean student was come from the hard and bitter routine of the theater. The effect upon her was of extraordinary importance. She was rescued from a delusion that the world of chill selfishness about her was the only reality of existence, and so was she saved from the cynical induration that poisons life for many of the stage-craft. Here was something still to have faith in. Elsewhere life might consist of the maneuvers of managers and the rivalries of artists, but here were kindness and the quiet, pure pleasures of the life intellectual. The impression made upon her she never lost; it came just at the time when it was most valuable; it was reflected

afterward in all her attitude toward life and not a little in the spirit and essentials of her acting.

By day she studied "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Cymbeline"; of an evening she talked with Colonel Ingersoll about these plays or heard his expositions of the philosophy of the Elizabethan drama. It was the first time she had had a chance to talk Shakespeare with some one that felt about him as she felt and whose knowledge of him was great, intimate, and varied. On passages that had not seemed to her perfectly clear she could now consult an authority; on the other passages that because of a corrupt text will never be certain to anybody she could hear in review all the ingenious, plausible, or far-flighted surmises that all the critics and all the dreamers, egotists, or bunglers had devised or imagined. It was like having at hand a *Variorum*. The advantages were beyond any reckoning; in nine or ten weeks she reaped the results of forty years of intensive scholarship. Even better, she was now having her own ideas strengthened, straightened and cleared, so that always thereafter where others wondered, she knew; and where others tramped dutifully and uninformed, heads down, along an old worn road, she understood where she was going and why.

At the back of the house at Far Rockaway was an old barn, long disused. In this she rigged a kind of stage and every day she rehearsed upon it, an up-ended feed box holding the book when no human agency was available. *Imogen* was her particular



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JULIA MARLOWE IN 1890



quest, and how to get the exact keys for certain of *Imogen's* words her chief worry. Act III, Scene 4 she did daily aloud in the barn and nightly in her bed to herself.

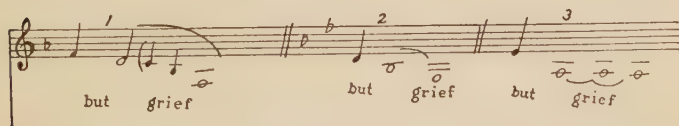
*Imogen.* Come, fellow, be thou honest;  
Do thou thy master's bidding. When thou see'st him,  
A little witness my obedience: look!  
I draw the sword myself; take it, and hit  
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart.  
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief:  
Thy master is not there, who was indeed  
The riches of it. Do his bidding; strike!

Upon the single line

'tis empty of all things but grief

she expended hours of anxious experiment alone in the barn.

"'tis empty" (pause) "of all things" (pause) then the crucial and key-note "but grief," and "grief" to be sounded so as to convey a depth of sorrow, despair and wronged innocence such as a word never was freighted withal to human ears. That was the problem. So she tried one tone after another.



and so on with all the combinations and ranges of notes she could think of until after days of patient

effort she worked out the chord that seemed to her to express the feeling she sought. It was one afternoon about four o'clock when she arrived at this happy port from long and troublous seas. Then she went back and did the whole scene, being now *Pisano*, now *Imogen*, and illuminating each passage with the business she had worked out for it until she forgot all about the barn and seemed to be living the tender and poetic heroine before a theater of people. As she uttered the last line:

Amen! I thank thee,

she was startled by a burst of enthusiastic applause. Unseen by her, and unsuspected, the whole family had stolen into the barn and found seats on the aged and tottery stairs, where they were rapt listeners to the fervent recital. Motherly Mrs. Ingersoll took *Imogen* in her arms and kissed her. "You've won," she said. The Colonel shook her hand.

"Julia," he said, "make no mistake. You have a mouth especially shaped to speak Shakespeare."

They trooped out from dinner that night and sat in the living room, the current of talk running full tide.

"Do you know Burns's 'Thou Linger Star?'" said the Colonel. "It's commonly called 'To Mary in Heaven.'"

*Imogen* said that she had heard her mother read it.

"Well, listen," said the Colonel, and he reached



to the bookcase over his head and took down the volume.

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray

began the mellow and perfectly modulated voice. *Imogen* sat forward on her chair to listen. This was the way she had always wanted to hear poetry read, not chanted, nor sniveled, nor trampled flat, but made into music with the touch of its meaning on every significant word, and tones changing with the changed feeling. So read, the phrases were a succession of new disclosures. It seemed to her she had never known before what the poem really meant. By the time the last stanza was reached

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes

*Imogen* was rapt away from earth as she had been at Clara Morris's *Denise*. When the Colonel ceased she was looking at space through clouded eyes, and always afterward she could hear those resonant tones and faultless modulations. Thirty-six years later, reciting the same sorrowful poem, she reproduced them at the first public commemoration in New York of the man that then sat before her.

Ingersoll's position as the champion of freedom of thought and a leader of a school of protest made his home, wherever he might be, a Mecca for original and sometimes for unbalanced minds; but the amazing thing was that he showed to all, including queer birds and insufferable bores, the same attitude of inexhaustible kindness. One day brought a lady

no longer young and gifted with marvelous resources of speech but no terminal facilities. She grasped firmly a button on the Colonel's coat and hung there an hour and four minutes while she explained to him the world and how she purposed to reorganize it. When at last she had joyed many suffering hearts by taking her departure I said:

"Why on earth do you allow yourself to be bothered with all these cranks, lunatics and parrots? Why don't you shoo them away?"

The big blue eyes steeled up as much as I ever saw them against anybody and he said:

"I had rather be bored than unkind. It helps them and doesn't hurt me. And if you come to that, what is a crank? Mr. A thinks that Mr. B is a strange fellow, a crank or a pest; he doesn't see how Mr. B can be so strange. He forgets that by just so much as Mr. B seems strange to him he must seem strange to Mr. B and on just as good grounds."

One night at Far Rockaway there came a gentleman in the elocutionary line that labored under the singular delusion that he was missioned to teach the world how to read Shakespeare's sonnets. Now Shakespeare's sonnets were in the Ingersoll household a kind of Bible wherein the Colonel read reverently, understandingly, an almost daily lesson. So after dinner the visitor favored the company with some of his peculiar endowment. The first sonnet he happened upon was the one that above all others the Colonel loved, the One Hundred and

Sixteenth, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds," and so on.

Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration *finds*

declaimed the visitor. *Juliet* writhed and twisted in her seat and clenched her hands. She stole a look at the Colonel. His great, placid visage beamed on. Club in hand to smite each unoffending word and smite it wrongly, Elocution ground, tore, and battered its way through other works of beauty, and was gone. *Juliet* was near hysterics. "Oh, read them, read them," she gasped, "that I may get the horror out of my mind before I try to sleep!" And she would not release him until he had read everything that Elocution had misread and so he had restored it from mangling.

On another occasion they were talking at the table about "Macbeth," and the Colonel said:

"Forgiveness is a beautiful thing among men, but there is no forgiveness that changes the consequences of actions. If I swindle Mr. Jones and Mr. Jones forgives me that doesn't change my consciousness of the fact that I have swindled him. I'll carry that to my grave in spite of a thousand assurances of pardon. Suppose *Macbeth* and his wife had repented. No amount of prayers and masses could have blotted from their sight *Duncan* gashed with stabs. They would have seen him even when they knelt at the altar. The notion that one can do evil and then smear it all out with a handful of re-

penitance is a hothouse of mischief for all mankind. The tremendous, profound, everlasting lesson that Shakespeare taught is that for every evil deed every doer of it must pay. Julia, the greatest sermon ever preached is the tragedy of 'Macbeth.' "

All that summer she labored diligently upon her *Imogen* and her *Beatrice* and at the end was still dissatisfied with both. She must have more time to work out her meanings and get her tones right. Instead of adding either to her repertoire for the season of 1889-1890 she preferred to wait, and so retained her old list of plays except that "The Lady of Lyons" had long ago taken itself away on its thumping stilts. "For this relief much thanks," she might have said. Some changes had been made in her supporting company. Eben Plympton took the place of Mr. Taber as leading man. The tour included Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and in each city she repeated and went beyond the success of the previous visit.

For this season she made a feature of "As You Like It." Special scenery had been painted for it according to her own ideas and the scenes in the forest, the work of the most celebrated scene painter of his day, deserved all the admiration they aroused, for they were of an unusual charm. In the interval she had developed and rounded her *Rosalind* until she had succeeded in making it at once movingly idyllic, a kind of living and breathing poem, and still expressive of the subtle mentality that she felt belonged to it;

after years of unremitting effort she had mastered the soul of this complex heroine. This made her happy. But her triumph continued to be a *succès d'estime* and her material rewards to be so much like Justice Slender that to any thick sight they were truly invisible. The reputation in Shakespearean rôles that brings marketable returns is not built overnight, but in her case was plainly under way. Since she had conquered herself in the Thirty-sixth Street flat, she and doubt were strangers.

In February of that season, being now 1890, Mr. Barney, her manager, secured the Fifth Avenue Theater in New York for what was hoped would prove a long run. The place must be rented; in those days theater owners were taking no chances on percentage arrangements with companies that insisted upon thrusting Shakespeare on a reluctant community. Eight weeks were the terms of the bond. The plays included all her Shakespearean repertoire of that time. It was soon evident that, from the box-office point of view, the engagement was a failure. The enthusiasm of the audiences made the old house shake and the veterans wonder; the Shakespeareans were out in force. But tumultuous applause and many curtain calls were no substitute for tokens wherewith salaries could be paid. The star, if in need of cataplasm, might have found much help in the thought of so many untoward conditions. She had played but one previous engagement in New York and that for one a week; names that last are not so made in the critical metropolis.

More than two years had elapsed since that laureled triumph at the Star; the metropolitan memory is short. She had no novelty to offer; metropolitan newspapers will give scant space to mere repetitions. These were easy reflections. But, beyond these hindrances was another to which I have already referred and with which I shall have to deal at length in a succeeding chapter. Miss Marlowe had encountered an influence in New York that was uncompromisingly hostile and sufficiently powerful to chill part of the press and repel part of the audience to which she was entitled.

Yet, to the students, her work seemed an inestimable boon. About her *Rosalind*, for example, Dr. Furness wrote her this tribute:

222 West Washington Square.

Dear Miss Marlowe:

If you are ever able to distinguish anything beyond the footlights, you could have seen last evening some happy and very enthusiastic faces in the box on your left. (How proud and stuck-up the chits were at being in a box received from you—nothing would have induced them to occupy their own excellent seats in the body of the house.)

And I, too, saw for a while the very, very *Rosalind* in the Forest of Arden and admired the rare naturalness of every look and gesture. Then, too, no swashbuckler air hid the true woman, the doublet and hose did not obliterate the duke's high-born daughter. 'Tis so easy to overact the assumed character.

Alack the day, I can tell you only what I saw. "By my troth and in good sooth, and by all pretty oaths that are not



dangerous," I wish I could have heard you. But, as I could not, all I can say is that the sight gave great pleasure to

Yours very respectfully,

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

P.S. Is there no hour, before you leave, when your aunt and you can come to see me? I have some ten or fifteen miniatures painted by Mrs. Jameson of Mrs. Kemble in Shakespearian characters which I know would greatly interest you. The costume alone is interesting with its fashions of half a century ago. Can't you come Thursday or Friday or Sunday? We lunch at 2 and dine at 6, in humblest style and you would both be heartily welcome at any hour.

Yours

H. H. F.

Dr. Furness's great misfortune was his deafness, which explains his reference to his inability to hear her.

At the end of four weeks the losses of the season amounted to \$29,000. The management felt it could sustain no more and the remaining four weeks of the lease were sold to the Kendalls. The vacant time thus thrust upon the Marlowe company must be filled, there was no chance for choice in filling it, and the result was that the next four weeks were distributed among one-night stands. I will put the case as genially as possible. Let us say that many of the places thus favored were of a size smaller than enterprises of this magnitude were accustomed to visit. In thirty nights Miss Marlowe appeared in thirty cities—or less. From them she gained no bankable

wealth but an intimate and satisfying knowledge of the American small-town hotel of that day. "I had read in the old philosophers," she said, "that all access of knowledge was to be welcomed with joy. By the middle of the third week I was convinced that it might be purchased at too high a price. I would have given all the joy that pertained to it for one clean, comfortable bed and something edible—real and not near food."

From this jungle she emerged to visit Boston again and feel once more the warmth of its friendship and unwavering support.

That season wore to an end with no ponderable improvement in the business aspect of her career but a sure strengthening of her position and spreading of her fame. The summer of 1890 she spent at Shrewsbury Beach, Atlantic Highlands, with Miss Dow, who had now become Mrs. Currier.

Among the discriminating patrons of dramatic art in Boston at that time was Colonel Albert A. Pope, whose name was familiar to millions of Americans as the perfecter of the bicycle. At a Back Bay tea-party Colonel Pope was introduced to Miss Marlowe and expressed an excellent critical judgment of the work he had seen her do. His friendly appreciation found practical expression in the gift of a bicycle that he deemed to have unusual merits; therefore she added cycling to her other outdoor exercises and could be seen of a fair morning skimming over the sands of Shrewsbury.

She had perceived clearly that with the coming of

the next season she must have a new play, and all that summer she toiled with little intermission upon her preparation of "Much Ado," with which she had been busy these two years. As we have noticed, to prepare a play meant for her so much exhausting labor and grinding anxiety that, except to an enthusiast or a fanatic, the results would hardly seem worth while. Her health was not good, the summer was hot and trying, and it appears that she overdid her strength. When the time came to begin rehearsals, she was thin as a rake, pale, hollow-eyed, hectic and all at low tension.

There had been built that year in Memphis, Tennessee, a new theater named in her honor and she was to open it in September. Rehearsals were called for Louisville, Kentucky, at the end of August. The weather was intensely hot, the labor of drilling the actors into her notions about "Much Ado" was great, and when the time came to move upon Memphis she was living on her nerves.

The price was to come later.

She opened the Marlowe Theater with her first performance of *Beatrice*. The house was crowded, her reception most warm and the comments of the press all laudatory. But, for reasons I shall take up later, she was dissatisfied both with *Beatrice* as she portrayed it and with the production in general. Her mental uneasiness augmented her physical distress. After a week in Memphis came a short season of one-night stands and early in October she returned to Philadelphia.

Miss Dow continued to travel with her, to aid her stage work, to act as immediate business manager and to stand between her and no end of annoyances. As the cab drew up to the entrance of the hotel that morning in Philadelphia, Aunt Ada gazed with lowering brow at something she saw on the sidewalk.

"What's all this?" she said, and pointed.

There, on the broad footwalk, stenciled in glaring red was this:

Come to the Chestnut Street Theater to-night! See Julia Marlowe the Great!

The glint in her eyes boded no good to whomsoever might be responsible; this was the kind of thing she and Miss Marlowe had always shunned. At the hotel a telephone call brought the manager to answer for his misdeeds, when it appeared that he had not erred from the true path of Dow-like restraint. All the sidewalks in all the thronged part of the city had been found that morning decorated with this same huge stencil. Mr. Barney, of course, had started at once to find the meaning. He had learned that it was the work of a man of means that had been in the audience that first night at the barn and every night thereafter while the engagement lasted. At his own initiative and expense he had undertaken to help spread the glad news of Julia Marlowe's return. When Mr. Barney hunted him down he declined to accept any thanks for his amateur and not wholly admired effort in advertising, saying that it

was little enough to do in return for the pleasure he had had. He never saw Miss Marlowe or Miss Dow off the stage and made no effort to see them, but every night of the engagement he was in the audience. He told Mr. Barney that his profession precluded any acquaintance.

He was a gambler.

This reminds me of a coincidence that may or may not have a sufficient psychological explanation, and of a story that in spite of a certain Rollo book suggestion I will tell because it seems to show that we go astray when we try to deny the implication of art and morals.

There was living in Minneapolis many years ago a gambler of some note that of a sudden threw up the cards, quit the game, and went in for a more honest career, at which he was fairly successful. He told the story himself; I must suppose it to be true. He said that he had a night off and thought he would like to go to what he called "a show." He wandered up to the old Grand Opera House and saw there was a play on the boards called "Twelfth Night" and an actress named Julia Marlowe. He knew little about either, but he had been decently educated and remembering from his school-days vague outlines of the play believed he was in to be bored. Yet a show was a show and he bought a ticket, went in, and sat down. He said that when the actress came out and began to speak there was about her and the words she said and the way she said them something that in his own phrase

"shook him up." It seemed to him an expression of purity, goodness, and ethereal beauty all new. The farther the play went the more he was engrossed with it and the more he became conscious of the difference between the world that this signified and the world in which he moved. I suppose he may have had at heart some surplusage of sentiment. Many gamblers have this complex; Jack Oakhurst was not altogether fanciful. Anyway, he said that the sheer and pure beauty of that performance touched something in him that needed to be touched and when he walked out of that theater he was done with the old way of livelihood and never went back to it.

The Philadelphia engagement opened as brightly as the sun upon an Easter day, so far as public and press were concerned; but it was all otherwise with the actress. A profound weariness had come over her; she was playing all the time under whip and spur. The clamoring chorus of approval that arose at the sight of her *Beatrice* cheered all but her. The most reticent critics declared it to be a notable addition to her artistic creations, a view that changed not in the least her own opinion of its shortcomings. Toward the end of the week, in the "Call Him to Dinner" Scene of "Much Ado," she had the misfortune to sprain her ankle and, although she was able to continue to play, she was always in great pain so long as she was standing. Among the generous souls that had become interested in her and her career were Colonel and Mrs. Alexander McClure,



who were now her dear friends and confidants. Colonel McClure was editor of the *Philadelphia Times*. When her accident occurred, Miss Marlowe was removed to the McClure home where she could have better care and more quiet than at a hotel.

On Friday night of the second week of her engagement, she was evidently so ill that Colonel McClure arranged to have a physician see her. She went through her part—it was *Parthenia* in “Ingo-mar” that night—with burning cheeks and a pounding head. The next afternoon she was to play in “Twelfth Night.” That morning the doctor called early. He made an examination and struck all her hopes to earth with two words. She had typhoid fever, and he canceled all her engagements, ordered her to bed and sent for a nurse.

The next day the little world of her friends and the much larger world of her admirers and sympathizers awoke to the blank fact that the young woman that of all on our stage had given the greatest promise of the best art was in deadly danger. The telegraph carried the ill news widely and from many cities the messages of inquiry and concern began to flow in. The Ingersolls were hard hit. They had all come to think of her as truly a member of their family, as a sister or daughter; “Julia” they always called her. Now they wired for the fullest information and continued to wire and to send offers of help. The next day she was worse and another doctor came; by Monday

there were three in attendance upon her and two nurses. The disease seemed slowly to be getting the upper hand, she was delirious much of the time, and believing herself to be on the stage, recited her familiar speeches in all her plays. Sometimes she was at rehearsal and could not make the play go as she wished. Once she was back in Caldbeck, picking flowers.

The good folk of the theater were overwhelmed at the thought that their young colleague should be stricken at the very door of a career that had promised to be so wonderful. Both and Barrett were then playing in Philadelphia. Both came repeatedly to her door to ask about her and to proffer help. Richard Mansfield sent flowers every day. There was so much concern in the stage world that news had to be sent regularly from the bedside. Day after day she seemed to be growing worse. When she was conscious she showed a front of composure and made a desperate fight for her life, but most of the time her mind was wandering in strange places or she lay in a stupor.

They cut off close to her scalp all her beautiful dark brown hair. Septic conditions set in; her face began to swell; soon she was unrecognizable. The swelling seemed to be beyond control; the doctors began to talk of lancing her cheeks to release the poison. On this Colonel McClure, who had been sending daily bulletins to Colonel Ingersoll, wrote him sadly to be prepared for the worst, and Colonel Ingersoll made this reply from his office:

45 Wall Street,  
New York,  
November 20, '90.

My Dear Col. McClure:

I was greatly shocked when I read your dispatch in regard to the condition of Miss Marlowe. I did not think her in danger. It seems too terrible to believe. Let me know if I can be of assistance. Poor girl! Is her career to end in its morning? I hope not. I have written to Mr. Barrett. He knows what he is to do if the poor girl recovers and he will without doubt keep his word. I am to see him next Sunday. How kind you and Mrs. McClure have been and what a fortunate thing for Miss Marlowe to have found you in her misfortune!

Let us hope for the best.

Yours always,

R. G. INGERSOLL.

The next day the doctors held another consultation and decided that the only hope to save her life was to perform the lancing operation. The instruments were prepared, the anesthetics were ready, and the nurses at hand. Dr. Ashurst, who had been chosen as the surgeon, was even advancing with his lancet in hand, when he cried out of a sudden:

"I can't do it! I haven't the nerve. If this girl's cheeks are lanced she will never be able to act again as long as she lives. It is too much—I can't do it! Let's try something else."

Some one suggested belladonna ointment. It was applied and seemed to be beneficial. Gradually the swelling went down and the face began to resume

something of its normal look. That day must have been also the crisis of the fever. It began to abate thereafter and in a few days the Ingersolls were cheered with better bulletins. In another week she was declared out of danger. Four months after the day she had entered the McClure home she went forth well of the typhoid but shockingly haggard, thin, and weak. By so narrow a margin as a sudden qualm of a kindly doctor was Julia Marlowe saved to the stage. You can find in the annals of the Philadelphia County Medical Society a full record of this case. Not for months afterward had the doctors ceased to talk about it.

The wonderful sympathy and kindness she had met deeply impressed her.

"Until then," she said afterward, "I had not known how much good there was in the world. Except for that summer at Rockaway, life had seemed to me to be chiefly fight—fighting for a livelihood, fighting for a chance, fighting with managers, fighting with actors to keep them right in scenes and lines. The world had seemed a mad, savage place where each man lived in a cave and looked out only to get a chance to throw something at his neighbor. Now I discovered how much of this is merely appearance or habit or superficial, and how much good-will and kindness and universal love there is underneath. It was worth while—that disillusion."

By March, she was able to play a little, but the strain was too great and in May, accompanied by her mother, she went abroad for a rest. Then she

was privileged to wander again through Caldbeck, to renew her mental pictures of Cumberland, to sit in Grandmother Hodgson's old house on Knocker Hill and to listen with delight to the lucid Cumberland dialect speaking quaint wisdom.

When she came home in the fall, for the season of 1891-1892, her strength was nearly restored, so that no one observing her work on the stage would have believed that a few months before she had so narrowly missed the summons from the most wasting and depleting of diseases. Fred L. Stinson, who had been manager for Adelaide Neilson, for Charles Fechter, and for Mme. Modjeska, now assumed the business direction of the company and proved to be efficient, understanding, and sympathetic. Creston Clarke, a nephew of Mr. Booth, became the leading man. To her plays of the previous season she added a one-act piece by Malcolm Bell called "Rogues and Vagabonds." Its plot was built on the career of Charles Hart, an English actor of ancient times, noted for his success in impersonating female characters. Miss Marlowe appeared as *Hart*. It was a pathetic little story and she made the most of it, but it was not of a nature to be popular.

Even while she had been ill, the Ingersolls and other friends were seeking to better her business relations. She had been now four seasons on the stage, working hard and achieving fame, but receiving for her labors only a salary that was little better than a pittance. The oboe player in Barnum's circus



band received more. When she went first with Miss Dow to New York, she had signed a contract that gave into Miss Dow's hands the main control of her business interests. Colonel Ingersoll felt that while this treaty had been just and necessary the time had come for her to end it and take charge of her own future. Lawrence Barrett was one of Colonel Ingersoll's intimate friends. He had an excellent gift of management, which he was then utilizing to care for Edwin Booth's affairs as well as his own. He had told Colonel Ingersoll that he would like to direct Miss Marlowe's tours, an arrangement that would have been greatly to her advantage and profit. Negotiations were begun with Miss Dow and long continued. In the end an agreement was reached by which Miss Dow accepted weekly payments extended over a period until the value of her interest should be purchased, and Julia Marlowe began for the first time to be in full control of her affairs.

Mr. Barrett and Mr. Booth had planned to play the summer of the World's Fair at one of Chicago's theaters, intending to give there memorable performances of Shakespeare done in a way worthy of the occasion and to warrant the serious attention of the scholars of the world. For this Mr. Barrett engaged Miss Marlowe to take the principal women's parts in these plays, he and Mr. Booth to do the great male characters. This design opened a prospect of achievement and fame beyond anything that had so far come to her. If it could have



been carried out, it would have been, we may believe, all that Mr. Barrett had conceived of it, for his skill and scholarship were alike great. Unfortunately for the world, Mr. Barrett died a few months after he had secured Miss Marlowe's agreement to co-operate with him, and within a year followed the lamented passing of Edwin Booth.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE POETRY OF *IMOGEN*



HE summer of 1892 was spent in preparing another addition to her repertoire. In recent years the name and fame of Sheridan Knowles have all but faded out, but in those days "Virginius" was a standard play, and all ambitious actresses wished to do *Julia* in "The Hunchback." Miss Marlowe determined to revive Knowles's "Love Chase." Mr. Taber, who had returned to the company as leading man, had a presence and method admirably adapted to the part of *Wildrake*. For the *Widow Green*, the great comedy part of the piece, Mrs. John Drew was especially engaged. The production, which Miss Marlowe arranged according to her own ideas, was worth all the admiration it aroused because it was so competent and so even. One of her pet theories was that a conscientious star need have no fear that subordinate actors may take from the attention that is the stellar attribute. Her hardest task at rehearsals was to iron out weak spots in the work of her support until she had lifted (or dragged) all up to one standard. This was a result of her habit of studying other parts as much as she studied her own.

"The Love Chase" under her direction went with

extraordinary vivacity and charm, so that it became for that season a popular piece in her repertoire. A singular fact about the play is that while everybody that sees it well done enjoys every moment of it, few persons would care to see it twice. The reason no doubt is that while it is good and pleasant fun and *Constance* is a lovely, capricious, witty, adorable creature, the plot is at the end so artificial and improbable that the moment the spell of clever acting is off, reason reminds us that the whole thing is not worth bothering about.

The cleverness of the acting in this production would have fascinated any audience in even a worse vehicle. It is seldom that three leading parts fit three performers so smoothly as Miss Marlowe, Mr. Taber and Mrs. Drew were suited here. *Constance* has touches of *Beatrice* in her. It can be readily understood that a diligent student of *Beatrice* would make the most of the scene in which *Constance* begins to show that she is in love with *Wil-drake* when she will not own the fact to herself. Then the third scene of Act II gave her an opportunity to use to the fullest effect her power to make her voice perform her will, and so put forth her magic. This is the scene where *Constance*, having disguised herself in riding habits and a veil, comes to *Wil-drake* as one deeply interested in his rural sports. The moment *Wil-drake* appeared she shifted her voice to another register and throughout the scene kept it so far away from *Constance's* that no one wondered he did not recognize her. She made

a startling shift back again when he went out, and of course the first line she utters after his departure, while she stands there looking after him—"He's in love!" gave her all the chance she needed to put a story into the utterance of a word. "He's in love!" told also her own state. She made a great comedy scene in Act III, where *Constance*, stung with jealousy, torments *Wildrake* about his unsuccessful attempts to make himself a town gallant—him of the country and the hunting field!

*Constance.* Do you call that walking? Pray  
What makes you twist your body so (imitating) and take  
Such pains to turn your toes out? (Imitating) If you'd  
walk,  
Walk thus! Walk like a man, as I do now! (Showing  
him)  
Is yours a way a gentleman should walk?  
You neither walk like man nor gentleman!  
I'll show you how you walk (doing up and down the  
stage a ludicrous caricature of his gait). Do you  
call that walking?

Some of the critics that wrote learned pieces about this production thought that Miss Marlowe showed an admirable versatility in adapting herself to the spirit of Old English comedy, the scene of "The Love Chase" being laid in the Eighteenth Century. Some of them assumed that this was a gift. They did not know that she fetched it with research from libraries and books wherein she hunted until she was able to make the time and its

thoughts familiar and real to her. If she looked *Constance* and spoke *Constance* it was because she had been able to create in her own mind a similitude of a *Constance* in *Constance's* own time and environment.

In April of this season, being now 1893, at Peoria, Illinois, she produced for the first time her version of "Cymbeline." The part of *Imogen* appealed to her more strongly than anything she had ever done except *Juliet*. It is an image that the poets have celebrated and all persons of a poetic temperament have chiefly loved. Collins sang of *Imogen* "To Fair Fidele's Grassy Tomb"; Tennyson worshiped at her shrine and died reading her, so that his white hand was found resting upon the open play; Swinburne celebrated Tennyson and her, in one of his most beautiful flights of song:

Not through tears shall the new born years behold him  
crowned with applause of men,  
Pass at last from a lustrous past to life that lightens  
beyond their ken,  
Glad and dead, and from earthward led to sunward guided  
of *Imogen*.

The purity and fidelity, grace and tenderness of *Imogen* have seemed to students to be almost the highest achievement of Shakespeare's genius. Nevertheless, no one may deny that for the purposes of the modern stage the play is full of holes. The difference between the Shakespearean aim and that of our stage has not been enough dwelt upon.

With Shakespeare the plot requirements were simple; any story that did not stand still on its own feet was sufficient; but the portrayal and development of human nature under conditions that tested it were everything. With us, the portrayal and development of human nature are incidental; the plot, to a constituency grown adept in romance and novels, overshadows all else. The remoteness of "Cymbeline" makes its plot of slight appeal to the modern playgoer, but what kills it for him is the last act. When the liberal scope of the Elizabethan drama requires a father not to know his daughter, a husband not to know his wife, and two sons not to know their father, and all this at the same time, illusion is gone out of the story for us moderns. It was not so for the Elizabethans, to whom any improbable or even impossible incident was all right if it showed fundamental human emotions in function or lighted great character traits.

In America, "Cymbeline" had been done by Mme. Modjeska and by Adelaide Neilson, and while both had been lovely *Imogens* they had carried the piece by only their personal magnetism and skill. The public put up with the last act for the sake of the beauty and tenderness of the rest. The case was somewhat similar with Miss Marlowe. Yet I have to say that in conception and picturing her *Imogen* was different from any that had been seen here before. The performance at Peoria was rather in the nature of a try-out. It went well and thereafter for the rest of that season, Miss Marlowe





*Photograph by Sarony*

FAIR *Imogen*



kept it at the head of her repertoire to her own great joy and the increase of her renown.

It was a part perfectly fitted to her convictions as to the surest means for that transferring of feeling that she understood to be art. The voice, the voice; first of all, the voice! The first means by which man in his daily life communicates with his fellow, the illimitable instrument of thought and feeling! As always her most powerful effects were wrought vocally; in the scene, for instance, where *Iachimo* thinks to tempt *Imogen* (Act I, Scene 6) her great struggle beset by astonishment, regret, and duty, pierced through and through all her changing tones as she responded to *Iachimo's* account of the merry life of *Posthumus*. When she came to the first test line,

Will my lord say so?

she stood immovable and created all her potent effects by the sheer utterance of "my lord" (pain, amazement, and a touch of incredulity) and "say so" with a peculiar rising circumflex on "so" that signaled something of her own purity as well as doubt of her husband's falling off.

To *Iachimo's* insinuated detraction of her lord she listened with staring eyes of a childlike and innocent wonder; and she told with the lowering pitch of her voice as much as with her contracting brows and lightening eyes the slow growth of perception in her of the vileness of his thought. The explosion of her wrath:

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have  
So long attended thee,

was a wild cry of a desperately wounded and indignant heart. It was to be seen then with what wisdom she had subdued all the first passages of this scene. Against that background the flame of her wrath was consuming and had in it something terrifying. For all her softness, gentleness, and sweetness, her poetic charm and womanly sincerity, here was no ordinary woman, here was character with great depths like *Juliet's*; this was one that for her mighty and everlasting love could brave a charnel vault, face death, trudge alone to Milford Haven. The revelation of these profundities made all the more appalling her storm of wrath loosed upon *Iachimo*; not with noise, with the stirrings of a nature so far beyond his guess that the glimpse of it in her voice seemed to awe us almost as much as it awed him. That he should cower and crouch before a vision of such purity and such lofty indignation seemed the most natural thing in the world. More than fear of daggers assailed him; it was the soul that shook.

When he had made amends and begged forgiveness she came to the line:

All's well, sir. Take my power in the court for yours

and charged these with a certain sense of a frank and stainless spirit a little contrite for an anger that perhaps had not been justified.

Even above this height which left her audience captive and wondering she went in the great passage of Act III, Scene 4. There *Pisanio* makes known to *Imogen* his commission from her husband to kill her. When the full horror and monstrosity of this treachery had by slow degrees won its way into her reluctant consciousness she went like one in a dream. Her voice took on that curious, strained, throaty, unreal, tonic quality that a somnambulist's voice has, and she seemed to hear not a word that *Pisanio* was saying. Only her figure stood there; her mind was far away dwelling on something unseen, and when she said "my heart . . . 'tis empty of all things but grief," she had one of those great and rare moments in the theater when every soul there hangs, all else forgotten, on the word that follows word. All that speech beginning:

True honest men being heard,

she spoke with long pauses and the weary accents of one whose life is fallen all in ruins, of one who, having lost all, no longer cares; and into the "Do his bidding—strike!" she threw a sudden deep yearning for death so genuine that *Pisanio's* hand seemed involuntarily to start up at her fierce command.

That night in Peoria she went back to her hotel tired and uncertain as to how the audience had regarded her effort, though comforted to think that the portrait had been as she had wished it. Mr. Stinson, her manager, a scholarly man and great reader, had known well the *Imogens* of Neilson and Mme.

Modjeska. Peoria in those days was not the metropolis it afterward became; the hotel proceeded upon a regular time-table. When that was worked through and done with, lo, nothing to restore stricken humanity! Miss Marlowe had been rehearsing daily—always a wearisome business. She was now frankly hungry but preparing to go to bed with the reflection that *qui dort dîne*, when here came a knock at her door and a bell-boy handed in a tray. It bore a quail freshly cooked that carried in its bill a roll of paper. This being unfolded was found to contain this scroll:

To the best *Imogen* I have ever seen.

FRED STINSON.

In preparing this production she had been assisted by Frank Millet, the artist, afterward so sadly lost to the world when the *Titanic* went down. A few days after the Peoria engagement she played "Cymbeline" in Chicago, and Millet and Elihu Vedder came to see it. They were delighted. Millet sent her this note:

Dear Miss Marlowe:

Charming! You wear the chlamys and robe exactly as if you had been born to them.

FRANK MILLET.

The next day with Millet, Vedder, and some others she was taken in a launch through the lake at Jackson Park where the buildings were rising for the World's Fair and the artists explained the archi-



tectural design of the gigantic structures, which they had helped to plan.

Chicago critics were without dissent in their praise of *Imogen*, deeming it the most poetic and touching of all her rôles. The public continued to regard the play with reasonable interest, chiefly because she did it, but never took it to heart. Still, we should note that she fared with it much better than Irving was able to fare in London, then even farther from the spacious times of great Elizabeth than America. The Irving production, for such reasons as I have indicated, was from the first an absolute failure.

The future of the stage in America had long been a thing she pondered as she was traveling or resting. While she was in Chicago she was moved one day to write on this subject (which afterward grew upon her) this letter to the critic of the *Inter Ocean*:

My Dear Mr. Barron:

I have been meaning for the last three weeks to write you a few lines on a subject that lately has been considerably talked of, and one which is very near to my heart, but continued traveling in one-night stands "foredoes me quite" for any labor outside of my regular work. But now having a respite from the tedious, wearisome condition of traveling I find myself impelled with the desire to add my feeble voice in the cause of that which I feel might be the salvation of our dramatic art—the endowed theater. For a long time I have cherished the hope that a movement in this direction might be effected, and after reading Mme. Modjeska's interesting article, found your able views in the *Inter Ocean* of Sunday, by which I was made to feel more clearly than

ever the importance, dignity, and power to control to higher and better things of our dramatic art. What Mr. Williams has said in his address determines me to take the liberty of writing you in regard to this feeling that the time is now ripe when an emphatic and persistent effort might be made with success in this direction. Why, if I may be so bold, do you not take up this point and clearly set before the public—as you so lucidly can—the importance of the endowed theater, its subsequent sure and beneficent effect upon dramatic art? With your knowledge and your skill, which has been so often and so truly used for the advantages of art and beauty, you are so ably fitted to agitate this worthy subject that I feel sure you will willingly lend yourself to it. I feel sure, too, that should such a pen as yours be enlisted there would be found many who would be ready and willing to endow theaters as other arts have been endowed.

I know you feel with me and with those who have previously expressed their opinions on this subject, that by endowed theaters we should gain the surest and best way to elevate Dramatic Art and the literature of the theater. My pen is feeble indeed in even suggesting such a subject, but happily there are others who are capable of fully expressing and expounding this idea to the public. "For my poor part" I should consider it a happy moment in my life were it possible for me to do good in this direction, personally or professionally. I write all this in confidence, hoping for your sympathy and that you will pardon what I know is a great liberty.

Ever yours sincerely

JULIA MARLOWE.

From Chicago she went East toward Boston, playing "Cymbeline" wherever she had appeared before

in any other play. As an example of the opinion Boston had of it, I quote from the review of the *Boston Transcript*:

Miss Marlowe's *Imogen* may be set down without hesitation as her finest effort so far. Considering the wondrous completeness and many-sidedness of the character, and the consequent extreme difficulty of the part, this should be a matter of no little satisfaction to her friends and admirers, to those that build upon her past achievements hopes of even better things in the future. Upon the whole, Miss Marlowe's talent has shown from the beginning this in common with Henry Irving's—that it is predominantly a talent for dramatic delineation. She has conspicuously the power, by no means common on the stage, of seeming for that time being absolutely at one with the character she impersonates. Her specifically histrionic skill may at times fall short of showing the character in a very strong light, but the illusion she produces of really being the character she assumes to be is none the less complete and constant.

"And that's Peg Woffington's notion of an actress; better it if you can," the recipient of this praise might have quoted in triumph. It revealed truly, as so often before, the difference between her conception of the actor's art and the conception of those that went to the theater to receive thrills—as they would go to an electropath to receive shocks. To search out of the lines the character as she appeared to the poet's vision and then to make that image alive on the stage seemed to her the beginning and the end of the business.

Financially, this was the most successful season

she had so far played. Besides, it was good because it enlarged her constituency. For the first time she was introduced to the Pacific states. Before that Kansas City had been farthest West. This time her manager mapped a tour across the continent to San Francisco by one route and back by another. The West gave her a characteristically Western welcome and always after that season she was the first favorite in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other coast cities. But if her work that year added to her reputation and following, it left her only a negligible residue in money. The profits of the enterprise must go to redeeming the debts incurred in the dead and past bad years and she had still no means she could call her own.

For the Women's Congress at the World's Fair that year she had been invited to read a paper on "Woman's Work on the Stage."<sup>1</sup> She prepared it from her own research and knowledge of stage history and appeared on the specified day at the Congress paper in hand, prepared to read. When she glanced at the program she was startled, and for a moment disconcerted, to find that Mme. Modjeska was to precede her with a paper having exactly the same title. Here was a mess—some one had blundered. In trepidation she sat through Mme. Modjeska's essay and breathed more freely to find that while both had necessarily the same historic ground the two papers were not merely repetitions, as she had feared, and summoning up the spirit of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

Strong's went through that rather trying ordeal with such affluent composure nobody suspected that a few moments before she had been speechless with dismay. She even scored a success; the women present said it was a noble paper and had it printed.

The next year, 1893-1894, Mr. Taber sought his fortunes with another company, and was succeeded as leading man by a young actor, who, having won to a deserved reputation in modern comedy had yielded to an ambition to shine in Shakespearean rôles. Before long it was evident that in this he had erred. Miss Marlowe labored assiduously and vainly to bring him up to her required mark. In despair she sent for Manager Stinson, and declared bluntly it would be necessary to get another leading man; she could not go on with the present material. Stinson counseled patience.

"You knocked the corners off Taber, you know," he said, "and I don't see why you can't do it with this man."

"I am tired of knocking corners from crude actors," said Miss Marlowe. "I have a sufficiency of other troubles without that. Besides, in Taber's case there was something under the corners. In this case, so far as Shakespeare is concerned, there isn't a thing."

Henry Jewett, an experienced Australian player with an excellent voice and a pleasing method, was engaged to take the leading rôles. He was successful as *Benedict* but seemed to have corners of his own to be dealt with. To show what are the labors



of the actor-manager of high ideals I may mention that one injunction about *Romeo* she was obliged to repeat incessantly was often without results:

"Be young, be young, be young! Consider the text. It is evident that *Romeo* and *Juliet* were little more than children in years, is it not? Therefore be young!"

For this season Miss Marlowe had prepared two novelties. The first was a version of Mrs. Cowley's old comedy, "The Belle's Stratagem," revised and partly rewritten (as indeed it would have to be) by Edward Fales Coward of the New York *World*. Its great star part is *Letitia Hardy*, a character overflowing with life, energy, wit, audacity and in one scene taking on the assumption of a rollicking hoyden. Some of Miss Marlowe's friends doubted if she would do this well. Friendship seems to have curious fringes of dubiety. *Letitia Hardy*, it is true, was farther from *Juliet* and *Imogen* than the North Pole is from the South. But when she came to play it she swept skepticism from its feet with a performance that made the audience roar with laughter and still had a certain classical restraint and all the bounds of modesty. She had not often scored more heavily than the first night of this play when at the Hollis Street Theater *Letitia Hardy* took a staid Boston audience by surprise and storm.

The famous "Stratagem," it will be remembered, is something more ingenious than plausible. Mrs. Cowley took for her groundwork the situation dearly beloved by playwrights of her time—the chil-



dren affianced by parental contract and meeting first when they are grown up. *Doricourt*, fresh from travels and conquests, takes one look at his destined bride, daughter of a country squire, and is not impressed. *Letitia* looks at him and is smitten to the heart. As he doesn't like her, she is driven to maneuvers. She sees that he thinks her a raw country girl and that his pet aversion is awkwardness. She resolves to give him so much of it that he will turn from her in horror, whereupon she will catch him on the rebound. The next time they meet, therefore, she plays the untaught and uncultured rustic maiden, and certainly as Miss Marlowe did it, nothing could be funnier.

The scene is the drawing-room of a London house where *Squire Hardy* and his daughter are visiting. *Doricourt* is there, already ill at ease and beset with terrors about this clod-hopping fiancée of his. *Mrs. Racket*, *Letitia's* friend, has been employed to paint her in the worst colors to the fretful lover.

*Mrs. Racket.* Here comes the lady. Her elegance and accomplishments will announce themselves.

*Letitia* lumps in, a finger in her mouth and dragging a doll by one of its arms.

*Letitia (to Mrs. Racket).* Law, cousin, do you know that our old John—(seems to see *Doricourt* for the first time). Oh, dear heart! I didn't see you! (Runs behind *Mrs. Racket's* dress. *Doricourt* fumes. After a moment, *Letitia* looks out, finger in her mouth and her eyes wide open with fear and astonishment.)

*Letitia.* Well, hang it, I'll take heart. Why he's but a man, you know, cousin, and I'll let him see I wasn't born in a wood to be scared by an owl.

By this time *Doricourt* is boiling over and stamping up and down the room in despair. *Letitia* comes out and looks at him through her fingers.

*Letitia.* He, he, he, he! (Bears herself awkwardly to a spot in front of him and makes a stiff, clumsy curtsy. *Doricourt* bows.)

Her father, who is astounded by these antics, now seeks to interfere and tells *Doricourt* that his daughter is really a very intelligent girl.

*Letitia* (with a sudden snappishness). Hold your tongue! Laws, I may say what I please before I'm married (*Doricourt* winces) if I can't afterward. D'ye think a body doesn't know (with a galumphing sweep of her body) doesn't know how to talk to a—a—(swinging to and fro)—a—s-w-e-e-t-heart (smirks). He's not the first I've had.

*Doricourt* (furious). Indeed!

*Letitia* (terrified and starting back to the protection of *Mrs. Racket's* dress). Oh, lud! He speaks!—(coming out again). Why (with importance), there was the curate at home—when people was a-huntin' (drawl and swinging side-wise), he uster come a-suitin'—(drawl) an' make speeches to me—out of a book (emphasis). Nobody knows what a mort of fine things he uster say to me—an' call me—V-e-e-n-i-s—(huh)—

—an' Ju-bah—(huh)—

—an' Di-nah—(huh)—

By this time the house was roaring so she had to wait several minutes for silence before she could go on.

*Doricourt* (savagely). And pray, fair lady, how did you answer him?

*Letitia*. Why, I uster to say, "Look ye, Mr. Curate, don't think to come over me with your flim-flams, for a better man than ever stood in your shoes (*Doricourt* enraged) is comin' over to marry me." (Groan from *Doricourt*.) But ifags, I begin to think I was out. Parson Dobbins was the sprightlier man of the two.

*Doricourt*. Surely, this cannot be Miss Hardy!

*Letitia*. Laws! Why don't you know me? You saw me to-day. But I was so daunted before my father an' the lawyer an' all them, an' didn' dare to speak out. So may be you thought I couldn't. But I can talk as fast as anybody when I know folks a little.

So then she sang. "Where Are You Going, My Pretty Maid?" was her offering, done with rural confusion and strange falsetto notes all through, with the queerest little shrieks and trebles in her voice and half the time off key. The house rocked.

The scene ended with her club-footed attempt at a country dance, after which she fell to her knees among her dolls.

When it came to the scene where, disguised at the mask ball, *Letitia* causes *Doricourt* to fall madly in love with her, she made such use of her singular power of voice control as she had made in "The Love Chase" and with the same surprising result.

In cutting out the unplayable parts of the original, Mr. Coward's excellent version had left but three acts and these not long enough to fill an evening. For an afterpiece Miss Marlowe used her other novelty of that season, and scarcely anything she could have selected would afford a more startling contrast.

It was a one-act metrical tragedy by Ernest Lacy, a principal of one of the high schools of Philadelphia, and had for its theme the melancholy story of Thomas Chatterton, "the marvelous boy that perished in his pride," the extraordinary boy poet of England. Miss Marlowe had long been familiar with the story and an admirer of Chatterton's work;<sup>2</sup> the play appealed to all her sympathies. Mr. Lacy dealt with only the last scenes in Chatterton's life, the end of all in his London attic. He had introduced a note of heart interest by providing Bergum, the Bristol pewterer that *Chatterton* duped, with a daughter in love with the poet; but this was more suggested than shown. The whole thing lasted only forty minutes on the stage but it is seldom an audience in forty minutes has its feeling so wrought upon. The first note struck is one of sadness and with every line thereafter the pathos deepens until at the last it searches to the very heart of pity. Mr. Lacy put into his poet's mouth a

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<sup>2</sup> Especially the "Excelente Balade of Charitie," which she regarded as surely the work of genius. But she pointed out that the tragedy of "Aella" and Chatterton's "Burletta" had strong dramatic points.

sonnet of his own making that deserves to live, whatever may be the fate of the play.

When silent are the chambers of the mind  
 To rippling laughter and to whispering love,  
 When Hope has whirled away, a moaning dove,  
 And bats dart in and out, and moans the wind,  
 Then Melancholy comes, to night consigned,  
 And haunts the moonlit windows. Perhaps above,  
 Not on this earth, can shadowy thoughts that rove  
 Like troubled ghosts a sweet oblivion find.

O like some cindered orb that shineth not,  
 Yet holdeth still its planets as a sun,  
 Is one burnt out by sorrow and o'erfraught  
 With that mute anguish of a life undone—  
 That sinking of the heart, that deadly thought  
 That all is lost and would be worthless won.

It will be readily understood that having such feeling about the play and its subject, Miss Marlowe read these lines with prodigious effect. Her fine voice dwelling upon the measured periods seemed like the soul of *Chatterton* returned. I happened to be present that night in Boston, and do not recall that I ever saw an audience more deeply moved. At the end *Chatterton* opens his little box, takes out all his treasured manuscripts and tears them into fragments. Then he swallows his vial of arsenic, throws himself on his cot and dies. Miss Marlowe managed this so powerfully that the audience, instead of reaching for its hats and bonnets sat gaz-

ing rapt at the scene. Then from the street below came upon the deep silence the faint sound of distant revelers singing—and the curtain descended. That an actress could achieve in one evening two effects so antipodal as the essence of *Letitia Hardy* and the soul of *Thomas Chatterton*, and both so convincingly, was one of the most remarkable things I have known on the stage.

At the close of this season, Miss Marlowe was married to Mr. Robert Taber, who had been several times, as we have seen, leading man in her support.



## CHAPTER XII

### BROWNING FOR THE STAGE

**W**ITH the opening of the next season, that of 1894-1895, Mr. Taber assumed the direction of the stage and of much of the rest of the enterprise. Instead of "Julia Marlowe" on the posters and bills appeared "Julia Marlowe Taber and Robert Taber." You will perceive that this young woman had little enough of the ordinary vanities of actresses when she was willing thus to surrender her identity. Still worse, it had once been contemplated to make the new title read "Mr. and Mrs. Taber," imitating the Kendalls, but from this ineffable foolishness they were saved by wisdom resurgent. Even the firm name they actually chose was quickly shown to be most ill advised. A certain part of the public failed to recognize under it the actress it had adored, a Bæotian bungling helped by a report that Julia Marlowe had a cousin or niece of similar name. A much larger and more important element resented the marriage and felt affronted by the appearance of Mr. Taber's name as co-star with his wife. In some way the notion got abroad that he had brought about the new style on the bills to win a place he could not have had otherwise. With the justice of

these conclusions the world is never much concerned, but just or unjust, the results were in the nature of catastrophe. Mr. and Mrs. Taber were astounded and disconcerted to learn that managers that had eagerly sought to secure Julia Marlowe as Julia Marlowe would not book her at all as Julia Marlowe Taber. I admit the thing seems incredible now, but it was then a most persisting and ominous fact. Not all managers, of course, nor many; but enough to make the outlook stormy. It is likely that neither had reflected upon how large a part of Julia Marlowe's hold upon the public was personal nor how jealous the public can be of its favorites. Some trying weeks ensued, as more and more the coming season promised to be unprofitable or maybe disastrous. Still, they were young; they had the natural buoyancy of youth; and Mr. Taber had in mind for another year, a great project, a thing that would retrieve all ill fortune and insure prosperity, éclat, success. Let the disgruntled managers do their worst this year; next season will atone for all.

In the main they now played the old repertoire, but included revivals of "Ingomar" and "Pygmalion and Galatea" and omitted "The Love Chase," and "The Belle's Stratagem." Two novelties were added, for it was always hard for her to be content with repeating achievements. At Chicago, November 30, 1894, she rather startled and greatly delighted the intellectual world by producing Browning's "Colombe's Birthday," in a one-act version prepared by Rose Etynge and Miss Fisher. It was



*Photograph by Jones and Lotz*

NEIGHBOR *Constance*  
("The Love Chase")



an offering undefiled upon poesy's altar and a tribute to a great singer; for no one expected that the piece could be popular. In a way, the production was the literary event of that year; it set all the verse-lovers of two continents on tiptoe. Professor Oscar Lovell Triggs of Chicago University took the leading place in the magazine, *Poet Lore*, to write of it.

The original was in five acts. The new arrangement wisely cut these to one. For the stage, nothing suffered from the knife except some reams of blank verse excellent to read and dull to rehearse. What was left seemed to show the more plainly the strong character lights, conflicts of emotion, and interest of action that after all underlie the words. The cutting was chiefly in Act III, of which scarcely anything was retained, and in Act V, which was reduced to a dialogue and the finale. One character was entirely omitted. I think he was scarcely missed, even by the elect. These sweeping cuts left in strong relief the love scenes between *Colombe* and *Valence*, which was powerfully played by Mr. Taber. It also caused to stand out the conflict between the ideas of worldly success and dominion, represented by *Berthold*, and of spiritual exaltation and the "new world," typified by *Colombe*.

I spoke, belike slightly, of the elect. Even the choicest spirits among these were rather astonished to see this drama emerging from the closet to which for half a century it had been consigned and taking on all the appearance of a real play.

Not one of them, I know, had ever seen in the text such a *Colombe* as now played on their emotions and made more music of the lines than maybe Browning himself had heard. It went to a climax, too; began with a grip and went to a climax, line by line, up to the vivid last scene where this heroine, put to the test, thrusts aside the crown of the Empire to remain merely *Colombe of Ravenstein* and have her love.

*Colombe.* (As *Valence* prepares to retire)

Nay, do your duty first.

You bore this paper; I have registered

My answer to it; read it and have done!

(*Valence* reads the renunciation.)

I take him, I give up Juliers and the world.

This is my Birthday!

The real power of that scene lay not in the fact that she renounced a crown to take her lover. The audience knew, or felt, from the beginning, that she would make that choice. What struck home to the consciousness of every listener was the significance she caused to dwell in and around that one word "Birthday." Of a sudden one felt that what all this meant was life begun, the world under her feet, all things mean, sordid, combative, sensual, material, put far away, a vista opening of another kind of existence, the life in the spirit and of it. Even those that had never read the poem, that came only to see a play, felt potency in this utterance, and to others it seemed breath-catching; so



much was suggested beyond any ordinary definition of the words. "This is my birthday"—it would sound, one might think, about as moving as, "Please pass the mustard." Not so; not as it was spoken on that stage. Here it meant the end of doubt, the end of groping, the end of all degrading things, the foreshadowing of all things noble.

To one height still greater than this she rose with the last line of all.

*Colombe* (with a joyous laugh, turning from the rest).  
Come, *Valence*, to our friends—God's earth.

*Valence* (taking her in his arms). And thee!

"God's earth!" It seemed so when it was said in that fashion. Nothing else seemed to matter but just goodness and peace and calm. Professor Triggs thought any other utterance would have made the meaning vain. It would—vainer than thorns crackling.

"Colombe's Birthday" was shown in Boston and elsewhere and created the same deep impression of admiration for the spirit that prompted and sustained a portraiture so unusual and a touch so scholarly and exact.

The other new feature in this season's offerings was "The School for Scandal," in which (at Brooklyn, December, 1894) Julia Marlowe was seen for the first time as *Lady Teazle*. It was strange to see her do such a part, but there need not have been so much puckered brow and shaking of puzzled head in the comments. The stage star that looks at

anything but her own individual interests must be a rare bird. She produced "The School for Scandal" because, having the center of the stage in so many other plays, she held it but fair to move toward a counterbalance of glories. Mr. Taber's greatest rôle was *Joseph Surface*. It is hardly necessary to say that otherwise she would not have assumed *Lady Teazle*. She never imagined the part had in it anything suited to her bent of mind, but she did it conscientiously and loyally according to her lights. When she came to study it she thought she found in it some things not well known to tradition. This was unfortunate, in a way, because there is not another character in the standard drama more familiar or more definitely settled to the general mind whence ten thousand school performances have eliminated the least chance of heresy. The evidences of an underlying worth and dignity in Miss Marlowe's drawing constituted a revolutionary innovation. I seem to be writing of this performance as if some apology were necessary. There is no such need; the press comments were generally favorable and if part of the public was surprised and maybe a little doubtful, it applauded generously with the rest. But the point is that her acting to be satisfactory to herself, must be based upon feeling and she could never come by any great depth of feeling about *Lady Teazle*. It lasted only that season and she never returned to it.

She had now to undergo two experiences rather more than distasteful to a woman that never could



*Photograph by Thomson*

*"Lady Teazle, BY ALL THAT'S WONDERFULL!"*



adjust herself, in her own preferences and thinkings, to the pitiless publicity that attends the lives of actors.

The first was a sharp reflex of the hostility that had developed among certain theater managers against the co-star and partnership arrangement under which she was traveling. A contract had been made for the company to play four weeks at the old Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia. The management, on the ground that the change in Miss Marlowe's stage name had injured her drawing power, refused to pay a part of the percentage called for by the contract. A vexatious lawsuit followed and while it was decided absolutely in her favor she hated the necessity of laying bare her troubles before the public.

The other incident showed the Cumberland fighting blood.

For years she had been a great favorite in Indianapolis, where the *Indianapolis News* had from the first seen what she aimed at and shown a truly insightful sympathy with her endeavor. Perhaps some of the queer springs of newspaper or personal jealousy were touched by this and flowered into a weedy sequel; nobody can say about these things. When she visited Indianapolis this season one of the other newspapers there broke into violent denunciations of the entertainment in a style the like of which she had never known. Against her or her work or her capacity it had no word to offer, but with an astonishing and savage bitterness it

attacked the support and especially Mr. Taber. In the entire supporting company, it said, was not one actor or actress of standing or of good ability, and it turned vitriol upon the local management for bringing to cultured Indianapolis a band of bungling mummers late from the bush. Miss Marlowe read these pungent outgivings and determined to bring suit for libel.

All her friends arose in protest and advantaged her with sound advice to the contrary. We might as well have spared our pains. Thus had labored Wisdom to keep Zephaniah Seek-ye-the-Lord Strong from joining Ireton's regiment. From the depths of a long and manifold newspaper experience I brought citations, one might say, knee deep, to show the futility and foolishness of libel suits.

"A newspaper has every right in the world to criticize an actor's art and work," says Miss Resolute. "I have no objection to criticism, however severe it may be. But a newspaper has no right to say that an actor that, by years of conscientious effort has won a place of honor in his calling, is a novice or an awkward rustic. And it has no right to assail my business integrity. I owe it to the profession to take a stand against a thing so unfair to every actor and producer."

"You'll see," said I. "Nothing will come of it but huge expense and vexation of spirit."

"If I knew it would bankrupt me I should go ahead just the same," was all the reply I was favored with.



About that time she was a guest at a dinner-party and near her sat James Whitcomb Riley, her staunch friend and long an ardent admirer of her work. In some way the news about the contemplated suit came out. Riley went aghast.

"For God's sake, do nothing of the kind!" he cried. "You will only arouse against you every newspaper in the country. No matter what may be said or done it will be made to appear that you are resenting a criticism. It will work you a measureless injury. Don't think of it!"

"I go to cleanse the flagons," quoted *Parthenia*, and heard unmoved the excellent arguments showered upon her. She had already engaged her attorney, Lucius B. Swift of Indianapolis, and instructed him to bring the suit and diligently to urge it. When it came to trial, behold, she loosed upon the jury such an astonishing mass of evidence about the records of the men and women the newspaper had assailed, press notices of their work, records of their engagements, and the like that she had no difficulty in winning her verdict, and so overwhelming Wisdom. When Mr. Swift sent her a check for the damages that had been assessed upon the newspaper, she returned it to him with a note that she had not brought the suit to win money but only to vindicate her calling and now that she had accomplished this end she regarded the incident as closed.

The summer of 1895 was spent at Stowe, Vermont, the country seat of Mr. Taber's family, and was devoted to active preparations for Mr. Taber's

great project to retrieve losses and establish the firm name in profitable and permanent favor.

This was an elaborate and careful production of the "First Part of Henry the Fourth." Many years had passed since James K. Hackett, the elder, amused and delighted America with his *Falstaff*, but the tradition of his excellence was strong, and interest in so notable a revival, one might plausibly argue, should be keen. Mr. Taber saw for himself a rare chance as *Hotspur*, a part exactly suited to his method, and his delight in that contemplation must have obscured the fact that there was nothing in the play for his wife. It is a great pity that Shakespeare did not foresee the star system and the public psychology about it. We have here in the part of *Lady Percy* one good scene; otherwise "Henry the Fourth" is for a young, ambitious and popular actress a barren waste.

"Not at all," said Mr. Taber, when once I ventured upon some such fugitive suggestion. "There is *Prince Hal*, a wonderful part for a woman."

It might have been for some women, but assuredly not for Julia Marlowe, whose great personal charm in the eyes of the public was her womanliness.

"The public has accepted her in *Rosalind* and *Viola*," replied Mr. Taber.

True enough; but there is a difference, one may believe, between the rôle of a young woman that to the knowledge of the audience (and with its connivance!) is masquerading temporarily in man's attire and an actress that actually assumes an actual

man's part. If this difference did not appeal to Mr. Taber it was clear enough to his wife. But she had in her that queerly persisting notion about equity in these stellar prominences and that singular capacity for self-effacement we have noted and are still to note. *Hotspur* promised to be a great part for Mr. Taber; it was likely to bring him, in the view of the public, to that rank of a star so far denied to him; and her share in this transformation she accepted as part of the day's work.

Mr. Taber arranged the version with care and skill; he had the instincts of an artist and a great gift for scenic effects. The costumes were made and the scenery painted months in advance of the production. An ugly, prosaic but unavoidable difficulty was put upon them by the armor that the last scenes of the play obliged both to wear. Neither had ever tried on a suit of armor; neither had more knowledge of armor than "Ivanhoe" and the like gracious classics afforded. They found to their infinite dismay that to move about successfully in these infernal contrivances required a set of motions of their own kind. It was lucky that Mr. Taber had planned so far in advance. Their iron suits were awaiting them at Stowe, and to accustom themselves to the outlandish garmenture they were wont to clothe themselves daily therein and go about the place looking like a madman's dream, as Miss Marlowe said. Every day was fertile in troubles, but I am glad to be in a position categorically to deny the story about these labors that under

the caption, "Deacon Hovey's Mare," came to be circulated through a part of the New England press. According to this narrative, Mr. Abner Hovey, an excellent worthy citizen of Morritt's Corners, was driving his newly purchased mare past the Taber place, while *Hal* and *Hotspur* in full regalia were exercising in an adjacent field. The mare took one good look at these apparitions, rose upon her hind legs, emitted a loud snort, and turning short, ran away, throwing Mr. Hovey violently to the ground where he lay in a state of coma. The delegates from Shrewsbury's tented field flew to his assistance. Mr. Hovey, recovering consciousness and seeing four eyes peering at him through the bars of helmets, believed himself to have died and gone to a world never meant for him. Whereupon he uttered a loud shriek and swooned away. This anecdote coming to the notice of a ribald Rutland poet was next done into verse of poor quality with the title "The Vision of Sir Abner." Out of his scurril wit the poet added that when Mr. Hovey recovered he made certain statements concerning three loads of cord wood that he had sold the preceding winter; but as these were of the nature of scandal and inconsistent with the Spirit of Agriculture as I used to know it in Vermont, they are omitted here.

There was enough of bother without going into the realms of poesy to imagine more. The victims of a passion to do Shakespeare accurately were obliged to wear these armor contrivances even when they sat down to dinner.

"The difficulties," says Miss Marlowe, "of properly guiding to one's mouth a spoonful of hot soup held by a hand attached to an arm clad in full armor are incommunicable to any one that has not essayed the feat. Try it and see. Just as you have it raised and properly aimed, the elbow joint will catch or the shoulder joint joggle, and then see what will happen."

It appeared that in many ways, iron in the light of clothing material was nothing to be regarded blithesomely and the local blacksmith must be called in daily with file and hammer to remedy defects or make the hinges work.

The piece had its initial performance in September at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Comments upon it were various. For the part of *Falstaff* Mr. Taber had engaged W. F. Owen, a comedian of rare and versatile gifts, and could not have chosen better. From the beginning Mr. Owen scored indubitably and his work alone would have justified the production. Otherwise it was admitted that the picture-making was wonderful and in all ways correct, the parts were well taken, the ensemble was all but faultless, the Shakespearean atmosphere most admirable. Yet the whole, thus excellently compounded, was not liked. Mr. Taber's *Hotspur* was often criticized as overdone and noisy, and as for Miss Marlowe, she began to learn then what the stage phrase, "bad notices," really means. She never liked her part and never felt at home in it, which was reason enough and to spare for her poor



success in it. All competent critics not merely admitted but proclaimed the intelligence with which she read the lines, the discretion and sincerity of her endeavor; but of illusion about her work there was scarcely a shadow, and could not have been more. Julia Marlowe could no more be a roysterer and bandy low jests in a tavern than she could dance on the peak of the Capitol.

Some odd incidents attended the production. Mr. Edwin Howard, a Harvard man, who was and had long been Miss Marlowe's director of music, played *Francis*, the tavern boy, and amazed everybody with a finished bit of genre character-drawing that suggested Jan Steen. *Falstaff's* corpulency was at first indicated with cotton batting stuffed into the lining of a jacket. As in his make-up he was seven feet in circumference the amount of cotton required was prodigious. Mr. Owen found the heat of this device unbearable and it was necessary to have a frame constructed of wicker and wire over which his garments were stretched. One night the play came near to a tragic ending. It had been found that *Falstaff's* armor was so unwieldy that if he ever fell in it he could not be raised, as he himself says, without levers. One night when he fell on Shrewsbury's sanguinary plain the iron breast plate he was wearing slipped up, caught him in the throat and began to choke him. The stage manager saw that something was wrong and rang down the curtain; but Mr. Owen was unconscious when released from his armor prison,



Public curiosity to see so rare an attraction brought out fairly good audiences everywhere; but from the beginning the feeling was strong in the company that the venture was not a success. Mr. Taber felt this as keenly as anybody but tried eleven versions of the piece before he would admit defeat. The chief sources of the weakness nobody could have remedied. Besides the difficulty about Miss Marlowe in the tavern scenes, the end of the play required *Prince Hal* to slay *Hotspur* in combat on the battle field—this *Prince Hal* and this *Hotspur*! It was too much. If no one had ever seen Miss Marlowe as *Viola* or *Juliet* there might have been a chance to make it tolerable. But the voice that now tried to sound the harsh notes of fight was too familiar in the gentle and tuneful speech of womanhood and so alone produced, in the mind of everybody that knew it well, an almost painful incongruity.

Yet armor-plate had this practical advantage, that it turned into an excellent thing to lead Miss Marlowe back to New York. A novelty she must have to satisfy public psychology and accompany her return; and if we speak of novelties where could be one in the Shakespearean line more novel than this? Time was therefore secured for her at Palmer's Theater (the same A. M. Palmer of the "act anything" incident) for the latter part of that season, and it was formally announced that after a week of "*Romeo and Juliet*" she would be seen in an elaborate production of "*Henry the Fourth*." In

December of that year, 1895, the company came to Philadelphia and I went over to see her first appearance there as the Madcap Prince—so-called. She met me with the news, which astonished me, that she had decided to discard *Beatrice* from her list of characters. For myself, I had always regarded her *Beatrice* as one of her artistic achievements. But she had her reason. She said she had studied the part for years and had never been able to do it to her satisfaction.

"I feel that I play it without sufficient authority," she said. "I must wait until I grow up to it. I will do it again sometime; but not until I can do it the way I want to do it."

I mentioned the enthusiastic reviews that had appeared in many newspapers. It appeared that as before these made no impression on her. "It isn't what other people think of it but what I think of it myself," she said. Years afterward, when *Beatrice* had been restored in triumph to her repertoire she told me what in her judgment had been the matter with it. "I felt that *Beatrice* was a woman of the world, a witty, resolute, rather sophisticated, but thoroughly charming woman. To play that order of woman required of me more study than I had been able to put upon the part and rather than do it lamely I would not do it at all."

Philadelphia found "Henry the Fourth" amusing and picturesque and applauded it well. Other Eastern cities followed and on March 9, 1896, Julia Marlowe again showed to a New York audience her

incomparable *Juliet*. Eight years had passed since that night at the old Star Theater when unknown, unencouraged and without adequate support she had so boldly challenged all prejudice and all precedent with this portrayal. Since then, largely without the assistance of the metropolis, she had advanced year by year to a commanding position in her art. Her return was in the nature of a march up the Appian Way. The theater was crowded, the enthusiasm unbounded and the applause so thunderous that a morbid critic of the other house (a phrase the meaning of which will be clearer in another chapter) was moved to rebuke its manifestations. The glory was instantaneous and unquestionable. It appeared to all that in the years of her absence her art had matured and her resources multiplied. "When I began," she said at this time, "I was concerned with what I should do; now I am most concerned with what not to do." Students of Edwin Booth's career will recall that he went through a similar transformation; probably something of the kind always attends increasing mastery. It was with a sure, unwavering touch that she did every scene that night at Palmer's; it was an audience convinced and more than usually affected that kept her bowing at the end of each act while the curtain arose and descended more times than the stage manager could readily count. At the end, the people were manifestly loth to go.

The critics the next day made for the most part unequivocal testimony to the greatness of her vic-

tory, some with joy and a few crabbedly and unwillingly. Poor men! the civil war in theatricals was then hard upon them; they could not do otherwise. The *World*, which was free of these troubles and could speak its mind, called the occasion "a great personal triumph," and dwelt with a kind of astonished delight upon the singular intellectual subtlety with which the depths of character and feeling, first by this *Juliet* suggested in the Ballroom Scene, were revealed in a slow crescendo of power to a climax not less than tremendous. It found that she read with a marvelous understanding and luminous sympathy, and her acting was marked with a fine sincerity, "so that it was really extraordinary at times to note how merely by a natural and delicately shaded utterance she drew from the best known lines new shades of meaning."

This seemed to be the impression she made on all that heard her.

As she had now developed her *Juliet* to the power and proportions at which she had aimed it may be well to note here some of its features that were deemed most significant.

There was a certain air of reverence and deliberate good faith about the whole production; she had taken the play seriously and as it stood. Wherever anything had been cut the reason was plainly not to be modern nor to emphasize the stellar orbit. With great wisdom she had restored the first scene of the First Act, usually omitted, and thus had thrown over all that followed the powerful key tones of

this overture. The first note of *Juliet* that the audience heard:

How now! Who calls?

came trilling from off the stage in a sweet and child-like treble, and when she burst upon the scene it was evident why no liberties had been taken with the textual statement of *Juliet's* age. It was not necessary here to torture the text into "eighteen"; this *Juliet* had manifestly not more than the fourteen years that Shakespeare gave her. In all that scene she was maidenly reserve and innocence, a girl's high-fluting voice, a girl's shyness; and at the suggestion of marriage, the innocent wonder of a girl that has never dreamed of love. When love came upon her so suddenly a few minutes later in the Ballroom Scene she looked wonder on the stranger; nothing was clearer than the perfect novelty of her experience and the delicate, virginal purity of all her feelings. There was a strangely moving suggestion of an access of foreboding in the tones of:

If he be married,  
My grave—is like to be—my wedding bed,

and when she came to the crucial lines so often misread:

My only love sprung from my only hate,

she sat and looked far into space on the gathering fates.

The key in which she spoke slightly descended through all this scene. The last lines were uttered about three tones lower than

'Tis an honor that I dream not of

in the preceding scene (Act I, Scene 3). It was not in vain that the actress had studied the effects of emotion on the vocal cords.

The Balcony Scene was more often described than any other part of the play, and here again appeared both her skill as an artist and her reverence as an editor. She combined Scenes 1 and 2 of this act by making *Romeo* scale the wall of *Capulet's* garden and *Benvolio* and *Mercutio* call to him from its other side. The scene was ravishingly set, the scenery all new painted from panels by Charles Platt, the adept painter of Italian gardens. As the jests and laughter of *Mercutio* and *Benvolio* died away in the distance and *Romeo* said:

He jests at scars that never felt a wound,

*Juliet* came slowly out upon the balcony, looking in the moonlight more like a beautiful apparition than a creature of mortality. She sighed gently and seated herself on a stool, leaning on the balcony with her head rested naturally on one hand. The soliloquy she spoke in soft and meditative cadences, a maiden communing with herself. The advantages of the Marlowe vocal equipment were never in better play; the lowest word she uttered was audible in the remote corners of the house and yet she



seemed to speak only to herself. When *Romeo* disclosed himself, she started up with a little suppressed scream and an involuntary step backward into the house, checked in such a way as to show that she half-hoped and half-perceived that her visitor was her lover. All the lines expressing fear for his safety were touched with a delicate, pervasive accent of affection, and when *Romeo* had brushed aside his danger she fell to her knees and leaned down toward him over the balcony rail, palpably giving herself up to the charm of her delight with the line:

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

One of the beetling difficulties about playing "Romeo and Juliet," and that which most often causes it to fail when it is played, is the nature of its language—the exuberance of Shakespeare's youth, so florescent, antithetical, ornamented and far from our prosaic speech. The modern actress will not know anything harder than to make these figure-embroidered lines seem genuine and meaningful to modern ears. Judge then whether this affrighting test was met that night at Palmer's. Take the chiefly difficult passages, so easily overdone or made to come lamely off, the speeches beginning:

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,

and

O, swear not by the moon,

these and the like, in the ears of exacting students, insatiable sticklers for the genuine, and even of hostile critics, she managed to make perfectly natural as the expression of being too deeply sincere and too innately good to pretend. We may believe there never was a more effective drawing of stainless, youthful love, exalted and exalting. Few persons could hear her read:

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee  
The more I have, for both are infinite,

without a new impression of the Shakespearean magic over words.

Mrs. Sol Smith played the *Nurse* and the two wove an irresistible fascination about the scene where the *Nurse* returns from her visit to *Romeo*. *Juliet's* mad impatience to hear the news shone naturally but not too transparently through:

I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.  
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me what says my love?

and hung devouringly upon the response.

"Your love says, like an honest gentleman ("Oh!" from the raptured *Juliet*) and a courteous ("Oh!" from *Juliet*) and a kind ("Oh-ah!") and a handsome"—("Oh! Oh! Oh!" and she covers the *Nurse's* face with kisses of an ingenuous and irrepressible delight).

When the *Nurse* makes her pretense of being angry, *Juliet* tries to appease her on one side and

the *Nurse* flings herself away, on the other, and she flings herself back. Then the maiden stops to think. With her bunch of roses she leans over and touches the *Nurse* on her left cheek. She flings herself over to the right—into *Juliet's* waiting arms and the quarrel is over.

In *Juliet's* chamber:

Romeo. . . . I have more care to stay than will to go;  
Come, death, and welcome! *Juliet* wills it so.  
How is't, my soul? let's talk, it is not day.

At the thought of death she springs up and runs to the window. There is still something of the child about her as she goes: it is all woman that turns back into the room with drawn face, the beginning of suffering and a voice foreboding.

*Juliet*. It is, it is! Hie, hence, be gone, away!  
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,

and fate and doom and present terror met in the one cry, "It is!"

These were the depths of character that she believed to be observable, though latent, in *Juliet's* first scene. She had indicated them with light touches then; she began now to make them more plainly discernible. In Act III, Scene 5, where Capulet and his wife tell her of the proposed marriage with *Paris*:

Now by St. Peter's church and Peter, too,  
He shall not make me there a joyful bride!

This was spoken with a full, sweeping implication (always in the tones) of that reserve power that was to carry her to the threshold of suicide rather than renounce her love. You felt it come over you in the way she touched that one word "not": no vehemence, no addition of stress, no shouting; the key fell through three-sixteenth notes on that word, and these notes conveyed all the significance. The next instant she has reminded herself that here she must play a part; she must deceive. So again with tones and not otherwise she signals all this in the changed feeling and slightly changed tempo of the next lines:

I wonder at this haste (slight distracted pause in which  
she struggled for the next play to make then—)  
that I must wed  
Ere he—that should be husband—come to woo.

When her father and mother had cast her off  
there was an infinitude of sorrow in her speech:

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds  
That sees into the bottom of my grief.

She had been kneeling before them; now she fell together and prone like one crushed with measureless disaster. It was when the *Nurse* she had trusted failed her in this final extremity that she disclosed in full the child all banished, the indignant and resolute woman come in the child's place, full strung, close-lipped, to meet her fate whatever that might

be, and with a kind of tragic splendor she arose to fling her cloak about her and seek the *Friar*.

The Potion Scene, as I have indicated, she read with a stern repression of all declamation, without extravagance, with the full play of her emotional artistry made the more somberly great by reason of that same repression. At the terror with which she seemed to see *Tybalt's* ghost one could feel the chill shiver that swept the house. At the last she added a touch that accented and climaxed all these effects. "This do I drink to thee!" and she emptied the vial, which fell from her hand. The sound of it ringing upon the floor startled her for one instant back to her terrors. She cast one fearful look about her, then conquered herself again, took three steps toward the bed and fell unconscious.

The setting of the last scene, the scene in the tomb, she had long debated with herself. If the tomb were placed parallel with the footlights and the gates across its foot, illusion would be spoiled, but to have it at the back with the gates in front seemed to remove it too far from the audience. Various devices were tried, but at last she found herself best suited with the tomb at the rear, the gates in front, the duel between *Paris* and *Romeo* taking place just outside them. Then *Romeo*, when he had drunk the apothecary's poison, fell in front of the body of *Paris* and *Juliet's* last scene was enacted in full view of the audience. It was like the last chords of a great symphony, exceedingly sad, exceedingly beautiful, all in harmony, the finale ac-

cording with the first bars of the *adagio*, the fate that had been lowering since "My only love sprung from my only hate," moving on through one great passage more tenderly tristful than its predecessor up to this summit of them all, the deep gloom of a death chamber, terrible and yet to the end lighted with the same unearthly beauty.

Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

Into that one line, uttered with no raised voice, uttered so slowly and lethally, into every syllable and sound of it, she put a finality more appalling than any vehemence could have been. Stern will to die and a sense of the futility and weariness of life, and a sense of surrender at last to pursuing destiny, and a new sense of the boundless nature of this woman's love, were there. Stern will to die, to be heard across and behind even the sorrowful beauties of:

O churl, drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them.

and so to the last symphonic chord that seemed to linger when there was no more sound and to be charged with the feeling of doom, broken love, and ruined life like the finale of Beethoven's "Coriolanus."

It was as the Shakespeareans said; to hear this tragedy done in this way was like a rediscovery of the hidden majesty of the original.



When all was done, the stage filled with a great throng of congratulating friends and deeply-moved admirers. Among them came the Ingersolls, filled with joy and pride. They had mind upon that night, eight years before, when the Colonel, sitting in a skeptical mood in a box at the old Star had been startled to perceive in the slim girl on the stage before him a veritable student and expositor of the lines he loved. His prediction made that night had come true; she had won the place he foresaw for her; and it was with no common emotion that he took her hand and added his tribute of praise to the joyous clamors around her.

It happened that Sarah Bernhardt and Eleanora Duse were in New York at that time, a rare conjunction of great lights in the theatrical heavens. Both went to see this *Juliet*, though at different times, and both fell captive to it. Mme. Sarah in an interview with Alan Dale, described it with rapture and being incautiously asked concerning another American actress, turned up her nose and remarked only "*affreuse, affreuse!*" Mme. Duse was playing on alternate nights. On an unoccupied evening she secured a box at Palmer's and watched the performance with an absorption noticed even in the audience. Not without reason; she beat her gloves into tatters in leading the applause. Ever after she was Miss Marlowe's warm admirer and steadfast friend. In a few days she had an opportunity to say what she thought of this *Juliet* and said it without reserve. When her laudation reached the eyes of Mme.

Bernhardt, that warm-hearted and unconventional lady sent this telegram to Charles Henry Meltzer:

I am delighted to hear that Duse thought so well of Julia Marlowe. Five years from now I am convinced that Julia Marlowe will be a star of the first magnitude.

Duse was not the only distinguished and critical observer upon whom the spell was laid. Mr. William Dean Howells wrote in *Harper's Weekly* a luminous study and exposition of the Marlowe *Juliet*, a study for which his own lifelong researches had made him peculiarly expert. He spoke of it as a beautiful ideal, beautifully and perfectly expressed. "She had imagined *Juliet*," he said, "with a purity in which there was no capability of consciousness of the low selfishness that makes the inferior artist wish to shine at the expense of the poet's creation." And again, that "the impulse, the tenderness, the trust, the doubt, the fear, the courage, that make up Shakespeare's *Juliet*," were all delicately expressed by Miss Marlowe, "and above everything else, the angelic gentleness."

*Juliet* of the book; not *Juliet* of the stage tradition.

More than artistic glory was hung upon these performances. The receipts of money for the week were the largest the company had drawn. After that a hope arose that all the trouble about co-starring and name-changing might prove but a wraith about to be exorcised.

Next followed a novelty for New York, being a

careful and scholarly presentation of Goldsmith's once popular comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer." Boston had seen a month before Miss Marlowe's first appearance in this play and Boston had given to her work in it a somewhat qualified approval. In New York the critics thought that for her the part of *Miss Hardcastle* was too artificial and sophisticated. One wrote bluntly that she "showed herself the most generous of stars" by taking this part, wholly unsuited to her, merely to allow Mr. Taber to shine as *Young Marlow*. That is to say, she had been effacing herself again. No doubt; but "unsuited," quoth he, and I was never so sure of it.

"She Stoops to Conquer" was not for the mature taste of New York at the end of the Nineteenth Century and would not be in any human hands. It is to be believed that these hard-working young people put into it all the life, dash, and go that the good Doctor intended and still New York cared not—except as a curiosity and something for antiquarians. But as to "unsuited," I thought Miss Marlowe laid bare some resources of her art until then unsuspected and some that compelled a new diagnosis of her latent capacity. She seemed to draw, mold, and vivify before us a singularly complete and sympathetic realization of healthy young womanhood, and the scenes with *Mr. Hardcastle*, the father, she touched with a gentle depth and sincerity of affection quite remarkable and new in any modern presentation of this piece. *Young Marlow*,

destined by parental treaty to a marriage he does not wish, is exceedingly ill at ease in the presence of modest women. *Miss Hardcastle's* first interview with this bashful and unwilling suitor she managed to make irresistibly funny and at the same time to indicate with an indefinable skill that she likes him and recognizes in him a substantial worth.

One feature of this portrait-painting started an odd discussion as to how far the actor is conscious and deliberate in his brush-work and how far it unconsciously masters him. Readers of "She Stoops to Conquer" will recall that *Young Marlow* mistakes his future father-in-law's house for an inn and his fiancée for a barmaid. When she perceives these errors the young lady is charmed with the chance they offer for innocent merriment; also to lasso the man she likes. As a barmaid, she lies in wait for her preoccupied swain and has almost as much difficulty in attracting his attention as if she were still the fine lady at whom he scarcely glanced in an earlier scene. The opportunity thus put into her hands *Miss Marlowe* used for some of that curiously delicate shading in which she most delighted.

*Miss Hardcastle* (in the guise of a servant). Did you call, sir? Did your honor call?

*Marlow* (musing). As for *Miss Hardcastle*, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

*Miss Hardcastle*. Did your honor call?

*Marlow*. No, child. Besides from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

*Miss Hardcastle*. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

*Marlow.* No, no. I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and to-morrow I'll please myself by returning.

He has been walking up and down and at every turn she has weather-gauged him so as to place herself where he must see her or run into her, a bit of byplay wittily and discreetly managed.

*Miss Hardcastle.* Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

*Marlow.* I tell you, no.

*Miss Hardcastle.* I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants!

Now as she said this last sentence she wrought into her voice a certain change, a certain note of authority and of breeding that arrested his attention and compelled him to look at her.

*Marlow.* No, no, I tell you. (Pause, in which he gazes at her and perceives her beauty. Then, with a total change of manner.) Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

And with that word one could perceive even under her assumed awkwardness the return of her native modesty, and the assurance that she has defined the boundary of her trick playing then and there.

Yet she carried on the scene with tact and a comedy spirit that was more than arch; one might say it had a kind of assured or even triumphant quality that took one's sympathy unaware, and kept

it while she slowly shaded off her dominant notes into a genuine affection for the man she was deluding.

The point that signaled the debate was this: In her assumed bravado as the pretended barmaid she sprang to a seat on a table in what the young man thought was a tap-room. Even as she launched herself in mid-air the sudden impulse that led her to do a thing so tomboyish and out of her real character seemed to leave her for an instant, and a startled sense of maidenly shame came upon her. As she landed upon the table and made it ring and jar she shot a frightened glance at the door as if a devastating terror of being seen had flashed upon her and turned her cold.

The question was whether this effective touch was deliberate and premeditated or was added unconsciously and instinctively, as belonging to the character. The never-failing prompt-book would have ended controversy. "Leave nothing to chance," was its motto and its author's rule.

*Julia* in "The Hunchback" came next, and on March 19 New York saw the long-promised "Henry the Fourth." Public and press had of it the impression recorded elsewhere. A production most praiseworthy, a purpose manifestly high, an occasion of unusual interest; but a play by any modern standards impossible. The engagement closed with a matinée performance of "As You Like It" and a return at night to "Romeo and Juliet" when the enthusiasm seemed even greater than on the first



night, and about two hundred of the hardy stood up because every seat was taken.

Although this season had been rich in artistic experience and profitable in kudos it had left no substantial rewards. For the next season things had been planned that indicated for the stars a visit to Europe and particularly to Florence. Europe is well and so is Florence, but not without money; and all empty was the exchequer as the season drew to a close. By a lucky chance Mr. Joseph Jefferson projected just then his famous All-Star cast of "The Rivals" and offered to Miss Marlowe the rôle of *Lydia Languish* and to Mr. Taber that of *Captain Absolute*. The tour lasted four weeks and made Florence possible.

"The Rivals" performed by the All-Star cast was a thing for one to see for the sake of future boasting and vainglory, but from any point of view of art it was negligible and for purposes of this biography chiefly worse than that. *Lydia Languish* was a part that Julia Marlowe could have played in her sleep and wherein she could contribute little but her name on the playbills. Mr. Taber was a manly and attractive *Captain Absolute*. Mr. Jefferson played *Bob Acres* as he had always played it and was the main show, except as before noted. William H. Crane was *Sir Anthony*, a part in which his warmest admirers could claim little for him, Mrs. John Drew the *Mrs. Malaprop*, Francis Wilson the *David*, and of all persons in the world, Nat Goodwin the *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*. In this he was

amazingly and intricately bad, and seemed to know that he was, for he played throughout with manifest hesitancy and discomposure. Some of his distress may have resulted from the happy-go-lucky fashion of the company about rehearsals. "Come if you like," was the only rule about these, and if one felt impelled by a sense of duty to attend, one was likely to find the others absent and the parts being read over by the stage manager. Mr. Jefferson had a way of varying his business and introducing unexpected little stunts that drove the other actors frantic. On one occasion, in a scene with *Sir Lucius*, he reached the cue word, but instead of stopping for Goodwin's rejoinder, he kept on saying:

"Don't it, *Sir Lucius*? Eh, *Sir Lucius*? Ain't it so, *Sir Lucius*?" until Goodwin, who was all unprepared for this, was thrown clear off the cue and could do nothing but follow Mr. Jefferson about the stage, mumbling and stuttering. I think it an odd revelation of the actor's psychology that when Mr. Goodwin, in a pained way, called attention to this lapse, Mr. Jefferson was unaware that he had gone off the beaten track and profusely and honestly sorry. He had been so long accustomed to playing with a support trained to his peculiarities that he had forgotten they were his.

Enhanced prices were charged everywhere for the privilege of seeing this aggregation of talent, and few that delivered the sacrificial toll were able afterward to justify it to themselves. Mrs. Drew, of course, was perfect and Mr. Jefferson exquisitely

funny; but I had seen these two with a company of unknowns give a better performance. It is to be supposed that Mr. Jefferson could not conceive of anybody that knew not what to do in "The Rivals," but the lack of that knowledge nevertheless protruded too painfully upon most of the performances. On the tour the All-Star cast confounded the worldly-wise men by being friendly and comradely throughout. Mr. Jefferson was always paternally kind and sweet, Mr. Crane genial and witty, Mr. Goodwin entertaining, and the subject of this biography philosophical with a slight dash of quiet amusement. Four weeks in private cars hurtling about the country, playing in the afternoon at one place and in the evening at another, are tiresome and have nothing to do with art; but they will bear fruit at last—two admirable passage tickets to Europe. Therefore, let us give thanks the four are not five, and on the basis of eminent authority, take the Cash and let the Credit go.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A STRUGGLE FOR PLAIDS



TWO new plays of unusual interest had been decided upon for the next season, that of 1896-1897. Mr. Barron, the scholarly critic of the *Chicago Inter Ocean* had made for her a dramatization of George Eliot's "Romola" and she had determined to bring out the tragedy by Francois Coppée that in French is called, "Les Jacobites," but to which she gave the name "For Bonnie Prince Charlie." It is the story of 1745 and the unsuccessful venture of the Young Pretender. For "Romola" she wished to go to Florence to get the background and atmosphere. The tour of Italy in midsummer was trying and exhausting, but she obtained the material she desired and came home full of enthusiasm about the season's work.

Rehearsals began early in Milwaukee, where the first performance of "Romola" took place on September 7 at the Davidson Theater. Its reception then and afterward was not too tropical. It may be doubted if "Romola" could ever be made in all ways effective on the stage. Mr. Barron's version was criticized as overwordy and under-actioned, but

so, by the way, is the book, if you come to that. One fault for the public was that the play afforded Miss Marlowe too little chance; she had, in fact, little to do but to look lovely and to be sweet and gentle; whereas the public had long been accustomed to seeing her carry off the burden of whatsoever she appeared in. The kindest critics thought "Romola" could be saved by pruning and rewriting, "but as the piece stands at present it could hardly be expected to hold the stage," they said. Some of the characters seemed superfluous or incongruous. A serious question arose about the epilogue with which the play ended, whether it dragged out too long the conclusion of the matter.

After Milwaukee the route led by Minneapolis, St. Paul and Denver to California, and thence by the South and New Orleans to Chicago. Opinions continued to be divided as to the exact worth of the piece. Occasionally a writer, apparently disappointed in the expectation of seeing Miss Marlowe in another of her powerful creations, intimated that Mr. Taber had sacrificed his wife's interest to his own; the part of *Tito*, which Mr. Taber played, being more conspicuous and stronger than that of *Romola*. By the time Chicago had been reached, this idea seemed to spread by some marvelous telepathy until it had become something of a fashion. Mr. Taber bitterly resented the charge. Once he was hardly restrained from resenting it with a horse-whip.

The production of "For Bonnie Prince Charlie"

was postponed until later in the season, when the company was approaching its New York engagement. There was no end of trouble about the costuming of this play. A swarm of Highland chieftains must be brought upon the stage in their native plaids and kilts and the rest. Each of these doughty warriors bore proudly the name of his clan, and every clan, as everybody knows, has its own distinctive plaid, or tartan. Now, a plaid is a plaid to hoi polloi so unfortunate as not to have Scottish ancestry and so dead to art as not to care whether a thing is right or only near-right; but it was far otherwise with this careful person. Long before one costume had been made or designed for the play, she sent to London for the most authoritative and exact book about Scottish plaids and now sat up o' nights worrying over it.

The further she pursued these recondite studies, the more baffling they seemed. There was the Clan MacDonald, for instance, much to the fore in the play (or something like that; God forbid that I should venture too confidently about these parlous matters! Perhaps it was MacDougall or MacDevitt.) Just as the right plaid, blue and red with a white stripe, seemed to have been settled beyond dispute, up turns another page of the book and reveals that there are two MacDonalds, MacDonald of Down-Stairs and MacDonald of Up, and one has two white stripes so fine you could scarcely see them and which, O unbending Gods of Accuracy, is the MacDonald for this piece? She bore well in mind



the story about a Scotch play that, not so many years before, had been produced in New York with plaids and all from an up-to-date department store, and, in the middle of a tense act, a brawny Scot had arisen with snorts six rows from the orchestra and stamped out, shouting, "It's all a domned lee, it's all a domned lee," because they had brought somebody on in the wrong plaid, the abandoned miscreants. A MacGregor had worn Stuart, I think it was, or the other way about.

Besides, another consideration outweighed even this.

"What's the use of its being right if it doesn't look right?" says an eminent critic of the arts in a famous work of fiction.

She reversed the formula and with deadly effect.

"What's the use of its looking right if it isn't right?" was her motto. E. Hamilton Bell, the artist, was employed to help about the costumes and accessories, and seems to have earned his fees. One of the first wounding discoveries was that, while every clan had its plaid, not every plaid would look well on the stage or blend into the picture, and it is astonishing to reflect how many brave sons of Scotia's Highlands were dismissed from the loyal service of the Gallant Chevalier (in this production) because they did not have the right shades in their garmenture.

Mr. Bell ransacked the stores of New York, but could find almost nothing that would answer. It appeared that on the whole the sordid shopkeepers

of the metropolis had little sympathy with the struggle to get things exactly right on the stage.

To show how narrowly all these minutiae were scrutinized, in one of Mr. Bell's letters (she was all this time on tour and moving from city to city), he said:

The samples I send now are for you to compare with your book. The triangular scrap called MacDonald (a plaid) is Clanranald. Notice how that blue becomes dark; the narrow stripe for Graham is a good test, too. The book is almost always too light, but Douglas happens to be a light tartan. I am sure that on the stage you could not tell Johnston from Gordon, a piece of which I send.

There is no reason why Gordon and Donald should not be roughened as much as you please. When I designed them, I merely looked at the French text and considered that they were chiefs.

If you choose Gordon, there is plenty in stock at Arnold's and so, I think, of MacDonald. The others must be woven and 'twill be an economy to have as few different patterns as possible made.

At one time, Mr. Bell suggested changes in the text so as to make it fit with the paucity of tartans in the New York market. At another time, he wrote:

There is no Prince Charlie (plaid) to be had in N. Y. Royal Stuart which I send pinned to it is the only substitute. There is no MacDuff nor anything like it. No Cameron of Lochiel. There is enough Moray or Murray. No Macuaren. No MacDonald of the Isles. No such clan as Mac-

Ivor exists. If you must do the play on January 14, which I don't see how you can, you will have to take the chances on accuracy and pick out what tartans will do among those I send samples of.

I have just looked at the manuscript. For Gawd's sake, are you all going to talk braid Scotch? Even the assorted peasants of whom you speak?

The professional costumers were all aghast at the terms of the order and, although they wished to help in every way, they said plainly they did not think the bill could be filled. At one time, Mr. Bell found the prospect so discouraging that he advised Miss Marlowe to make the costumes as nearly right as she could and then put a note on the program disclaiming any intention at literal accuracy, a suggestion that struck the Marlowe mind as emanating from Philistia and indicating a saddening lapse from grace. Mr. Bell asked that the production be postponed to give him time his wonders to perform, but this also fell upon unsympathetic ears. January 14 was the date set for the first production and, on January 14, it must be ready—and correct. At last Mr. Bell succeeded in accumulating enough Royal Stuart plaid to go around where it was needed, and then came upon a piece of unexpected good fortune. He unearthed a Scotch weaver that undertook (at a price) to weave whatever might be required. This seemed to Mr. Bell the happy release from his troubles and he wired Miss Marlowe the joyful tidings. I have here her answer:

Prefer to send to England and have them right.

Mr. Bell, however, got a firm to guarantee the absolute correctness of every detail of the weaving and all the rest, and Miss Marlowe consented to the arrangement. Twelve yards of tartan were allowed for each doughty warrior, and, with the hosts of them that at one part of the story must crowd upon the stage, the special weaving piled a sizeable charge. But, glory be to art, the things were right! The fact that, without a minute and inborn knowledge of these details (and in some instances, without a powerful glass), nobody in the audience could tell whether they were right or not counted for nothing with this lady. She knew whether they were right. That was enough.

Besides plaids, a Scotch play imposes other trouble-breeding requirements—claymores, sporrans, dirks and so on. What all this meant to one trying to make an accurate production may be gathered from this letter from Mr. Bell, written while he was still fighting his way out with the plaid question and when it was contemplated to have all the weaving done abroad:

105 East 18th Street

December 14, '96.

I received your letters and the samples and the additional sarcasm of two scraps each in a separate envelope.

I am getting an estimate both of cost and time from Eaves on the tartans. If it is satisfactory, I shall order to-day on your account. If it is not, Arnold will cable (at your expense) if you wish, and have the things over as soon as possible. Those that are ready woven can come by the next

steamer, but, if they have to be made, they won't promise. I send you Shannon, Miller & Crane's estimate for claymores, which includes scabbards and seems reasonable enough. You would need 12 of the swell ones at \$22.50 and the rest (30) could be \$7.50. He is to send me an estimate for belts. I don't know what price Eaves will send you for sporrans, but he seemed to me to have a better idea of what we want than S. M. & C. whose sole notion was black and white goat's hair and who declined to be bothered with fox, deer, otter and seal, of which some should certainly be made.

Prince Charlie tartan is taken from actual coats and plaids worn by him, which now exists, and it is named after him because he wore it. So we are quite safe there.

S. M. & C. have no dirks and decline to be bothered to make 'em. I should think the property man could make them and the other weapons, Lochaber axes, long guns, targets. Of course, you only want dummy pipes and will have a piper in the wings (if you can find one). The St. Andrews Society in N. Y. have one who could perhaps be got here. Have you not some drums from "Henry IV"? I forget.

The translation of the play had been made by J. I. C. Clarke, a veteran New York newspaper man and author. The rehearsals were taking place at Buffalo and Mr. Clarke journeyed there to see them. In the plot a situation arises in which the most ardent champions of the Pretender's cause are trying to arouse the Scottish clans in his behalf, and one of them makes this appeal to the Highlanders:

Where is the heart of Clanmorris, the heart that was dauntless and leal? On the sea, on the land, in the front of the fray, your blue bonnets ever were seen. Ye fought under

Bruce and ye won under Wallace. Ye hungered and thirsted, ye struggled and died, and never a cry from your lips but the cry of the clan and a shout for the flag of your king!

At the rehearsal, Mr. Clarke disliked exceedingly the way these lines were delivered by one of the men of the company.

"We'll have to cut those lines out," he said. "They sound like singsong."

"Oh, don't cut them out!" Miss Marlowe exclaimed. "I like that passage. Give the lines to me."

She took the book and declaimed the lines with so much feeling and force that even the members of the cast, standing about and waiting for their cues, stopped talking to look up and listen. Mr. Clarke was overjoyed; the lines remained in the play and became one of its great moments.

Stage business is a conglomerate from many sources. The part played by Miss Marlowe in this piece was that of *Mary*, the granddaughter of an aged, blind, fanatical and penniless Jacobite, wholly absorbed in his devotion to the Stuart. The tragedy of the story is moving and, at one place, *Mary* sheds tears. Miss Marlowe made this searchingly effective with the manifest sincerity of feeling that was so much of her art. By a simple but colorful device she revealed *Mary's* poverty. It was only the wiping of the eyes with the corner of the shawl, but the strength lay in the manner. This touch was added



at the suggestion of Mr. Clark, to whom it occurred at a rehearsal. When *Mary's* costume arrived from the maker's, it looked painfully new and spick and span. To make it look old, Mrs. Sol Smith, who was in the cast, took the dress and rubbed it up and down the worn and splintered stage of the theater.

*Mary*, in the play, is herself a most eloquent and active follower of the Stuart's hopeless cause. She is also her blind grandfather's sole and inseparable companion, guide and comforter, a condition that gives rise to many pathetic situations. After Cul-loden, the worthless character of the Prince is revealed to her. She tries to keep the truth from her grandfather. From this he is led to believe that she also has been seduced by the Stuart scapegrace. The scene that follows is naturally the strongest in the piece. In the end, the blind grandfather and faithful daughter are fugitives in the mountains, where *Mary* dies, and the last note of the play is the heart-searching wail of the old man, "Alone—alone—alone!"

The play was of great power that, at times, approached an almost grandeur of melancholy. To Miss Marlowe, it gave opportunities for some of her most convincing work. For the public, it was all but impossible because of its gloom and always increasing sadness. Few persons that saw it once could endure to see it again. The assertion of an entire audience in tears seems like a wild extravagance; yet I have seen this at performances of this

play and have stood in the wings and noted the audible gulplings of persons in the house. Miss Marlowe herself used to cry in the climaxes; yet it is to be noted as an interesting illumination of the actor's art, that, although this was so and apparent, she never for an instant relaxed that perfect control by which she was wielding her spectators to the feeling she desired to convey.

"For Bonnie Prince Charlie" had a better reception from the press than "Romola" had won. Miss Marlowe's *Mary* was declared to be of irresistible dynamics, and among the great parts of the stage. But neither play was suited or even possible for continued representation. One performance of either was as a rule all that could be given in any city; and the other evenings of the engagement were filled with repetitions of "Romeo and Juliet," "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night." She had continued to build and develop her *Juliet*, *Rosalind* and *Viola* until there was nowhere any dissent from the verdict that they were the greatest of that generation. While in California, she revived "Chatterton" and, with it, "The Love Chase."

Both of the new plays were costly to produce in the only style that she would tolerate, and the end of the season found her again without a surplus. For the summer, she went to the little town of Giverny, near Vernon, in Normandy. It is an artists' colony place; Monet, the impressionist, had his home there, MacMonnies, the sculptor, was nearby, with Lorado Taft, Janet Scudder and others.



*Photograph by Ye Rose Studio*

*Mary of the Highlands*  
("Bonnie Prince Charlie")



No lovelier region exists in Normandy; but the anxieties that crowded upon Miss Marlowe dashed something of the charm of a summer that should have been all rest and freshening of the spirit. A crisis had come upon her affairs. The fact that the public did not like her change in name and would not complacently accept her husband as a co-star with her could no longer be denied or evaded. The experiment of providing strong novelties to overcome this obstacle, or prejudice, or whatever it is to be called, had been tried to the limit; stronger plays than "Romola" and "For Bonnie Prince Charlie" were not to be expected. Indeed, there were no new plays of any kind in sight for the next season, and to go back to playing the old offerings on the old circuit was manifestly impossible. Meantime, the Theatrical Syndicate, a powerful combination of wealthy producers and managers, had impinged upon the theater world and nearly possessed it. The Syndicate, it may be said, was not in business for reasons of hygiene, and scarcely more for those of art. The Syndicate now remarked without tautology or pleonasm that it would be pleased to have Miss Marlowe play at its theaters but it would not undertake to find any engagements for her if she was to appear again with her husband as a co-star. If he was willing to be billed merely as leading man, well and good; but no more joint starring for the Syndicate houses.

Mr. Taber found this proposal highly indigestible. As he could not make the American stage comport

with his ambitions he determined to try his fortunes in England. About the middle of August he left Giverney for London, where he made a career, and scarcely reappears in this narrative.

Miss Marlowe returned to America alone and facing heavy odds. To a soul less indomitable it might have seemed that she was menaced with overwhelming disaster. She had more troubles than appeared on the surface, although these were many and real enough. If she was to play at all, she must play under some treaty or agreement with the Syndicate, for, alone and without means, to think of fighting that powerful aggregation would have been madness. All her soul was set upon playing Shakespeare. When she had played anything else, it had been in some spirit of compromise; if she could have had her choice throughout, she would never have abandoned the god of her idolatry. But the public, it had been demonstrated, would not at that time accept Shakespeare for Shakespeare's own sake. She had given to reverent and competent production of his plays the best that was in her, and at a great cost. She could not continue to make these sacrificial concessions. A play must be had worthy of her high aims and still strong enough in its popular appeal to compensate her for her labors.

This was the outlook when she landed. In the next few weeks she had selected a manager, Charles Bancroft Dillingham; picked out a play, "The Countess Valeska"; gathered a company, planned



a season's tour, and arranged a repertoire that would enable her to alternate Shakespeare with a more popular drama. Mr. Dillingham was associated with the Syndicate and her New York engagements were to be played at the Knickerbocker, the Syndicate's greatest theater.

"The Countess Valeska" was from Germany, where it had been immensely popular under the name of "The Tall Prussian." The period was that of Napoleon, the scene laid in Poland at the time of Poland's brief liberation. Napoleon on his victorious way through the country comes to *Valeska's* house. He is the redeemer of Poland; she regards him with reverence. Presently she discovers that the man she loves is plotting to assassinate the Emperor while he is under her roof. A great struggle follows; her love is wrestling with her patriotism. In the end, she gives up her love and saves Napoleon.

With her name on the bills once more as Julia Marlowe, in the fall of 1907, she tried this out in the country and, in November, opened with it at the Knickerbocker, New York City. Its appeal was immediate and great, so that it ran for weeks and easily headed the season's list of popular successes. The field and the victory were all hers. While the play was of a romantic and interesting nature, it was lacking in every element of the comedy, humor or vivacity that the public was supposed to demand. Even as a story, its development seemed to me too slow and methodical for the current taste in America. But these and other defects

might have been thought pointless when the piece came to be played at the Knickerbocker, because all the senses of the average audience were seized upon by the power of the acting, and nobody had opportunity to query after faults of the playwright. It was in this piece that Charles Frohman saw her for the first time and at the end gave his verdict. "This is the greatest emotional actress in America," he said, "but it will be a heart-breaking task to find plays equal to her strength."

To her career and to her purposes alike the great popularity of "Valeska" contributed new values. There is, or was, a certain element of playgoers in New York instinctively distrustful of what is called "the legitimate" and still having a liking for plays of a serious aim. This element had not before had a chance to see her and to know her; and it responded with fervor and devotion. She established, in fact, a new clientele, one that never left her, and somebody imagined a fanciful picture of her, which was only half satirical, leading as a shepherdess a new flock to the Shakespearean fold; for, as you are to see, this is what happened.

To the discerning, there were indications that the process, which was to be so marked and so advantageous afterward, was already upon its way. Later that year, she returned to New York and revived "As You Like It," and "Romeo and Juliet," reaping an abundant harvest. Incidentally, the announcement in advance that she was to produce "As You Like It" led to a singular episode illustrative of the

difficulties she faced and the way she conquered them. But this had best take its place in the coming story of the theatrical civil war.

There is a comfortable doctrine universally accepted in New York that the voice of the metropolis is the voice of deity so far as the value or fate of any play is concerned. Let the country take what we have taken and echo dutifully our verdict, is the common idea about this. In practise it is merely fallacious. There are excellent actors in excellent plays that season after season tour the country, avoid New York, draw ample audiences and make much money. For five years, Miss Marlowe had played with great applause in all the large cities of America and was not seen in New York. The judgment of the metropolis that we so haughtily call final, is more often upset than endorsed in the country; but it happened in the case of "Valeska" that the two verdicts coincided. On tour the business continued most prosperous, as it had been at the Knickerbocker; and it was at the close of this season that, for the first time, she had a surplus to show for her labors. She had been eleven years on the stage, had worked with patient industry and unflagging zeal, had made productions that for beauty, scholarly competence, and artistry had been widely acclaimed, had given to the country the best *Viola*, *Juliet*, *Rosalind* and *Imogen* of the generation, and this was the first money she had reaped that she could call her own. She had \$15,000 of undivided profits. The war with Spain was on; the govern-

ment announced an issue, by popular subscription of \$200,000,000 to provide for war expenses. She celebrated her first material profit by gratifying her affection for her adopted country. She invested the whole of her \$15,000 in war bonds.

That summer she spent in Adelboden and Mürren, in Switzerland. The question of a play for the next season, that of 1898-1899, was again troublesome. The final arrangement was that for the indispensable novelty she should appear in a comedy adapted from the French by Henry Guy Carleton and called "Colinette." Truth to tell, it was passing light in texture, lighter than vanity, lighter than a straw hat, altogether too light for the actress that had been so profoundly moving as *Juliet* and *Mary of the Highlands*; but it had a pleasingly romantic story and gave Miss Marlowe opportunities she improved to the utmost for delicate comedy effects. The chief character was an excellent, witty French woman at the time of the Bourbon restoration in France and the situations were woven skilfully around her efforts to save her Bonapartist husband from the Bourbon wrath. After a prosperous run in New York, the piece went upon the road, where its welcome was no less cordial.

After another summer in Europe, the season of 1898-1899 opened with a brief revival of "Colinette," followed, as soon as the preparations could be completed, by another novelty, which was a play that Mr. Frohman had ordered of Clyde Fitch to be called "Barbara Frietchie." The name and one



*Photograph by Pach*

*AS Countess Valeska*





transformed incident were all that really connected it with Whittier's famous heroine, although, of course, the name alone was enough to challenge public curiosity. Julia Marlowe as a gray-haired old woman was unthinkable. Mr. Fitch took a theme familiar on the stage and still more familiar in the bitter facts of the American Rebellion. *Barbara*, in his version, is a young girl of Frederick that, just before the beginning of the war, has fallen in love with a young Northern officer. Before they can be married, the war breaks. She follows her love instead of her people and is converted to the Northern cause. In the last act, her lover is killed, and then Mr. Fitch brought in the immortal flag-waving incident. Stonewall Jackson enters Frederick and sees the Union Flag that *Barbara* has hung out. A crowd of Southern sympathizers tries to tear down the flag and some Confederate soldiers help them. There are shouts of "Shoot!" and "Damn the flag!" *Barbara* is out on the balcony, holding the banner. She says:

Shoot! You've taken a life already dearer to me than my own. Shoot, and I'll thank you! but spare your flag!

Stonewall Jackson comes along just then, looks at *Barbara* and says:

Halt! Who touches a hair of that woman, dies like a dog. Pass the word along!

But *Jack Negley*, *Barbara's* rejected and half-crazed lover, now a private in the Confederate army,

shoots her from a covert, and she falls with her head hanging over the railing of the balcony. The murderer's father is a colonel in the Confederate forces. He must obey General Jackson's command, and orders his son to be shot. With this the play ends.

Naturally, these divergences from the poet's account started a debate, and, within a year, Miss Marlowe had received more than five hundred letters about the story and the changes in it. These greatly interested her and she undertook investigations of her own. They succeeded only in showing again the static doubt that overhangs all these legends. Nobody was ever able to settle definitely about Barbara Frietchie and the flag. All that seemed certain was that there had been a Barbara Frietchie in Frederick, that she was an ardent Unionist and that she displayed a national flag when Jackson's troops entered the place. Finally Miss Marlowe made this tentative about it:

In September of 1862, when the Union forces were passing through Frederick, *Barbara Frietchie* stood at a small window with a silk flag in her hand. Being a very old woman with gray hair, she attracted much attention and many officers and privates broke ranks to shake the loyal old woman's hand.

On the same day, but somewhat later, a young woman living in *Barbara's* street waved a Union flag as the rebels were passing. It was not fired upon. The two incidents of the unknown young woman waving at the rebels and *Barbara* waving at the Union troops became blended into one story and were passed down as one occurrence.

Thirty-five years had passed since the close of the war, and still there were persons that resented the imagined incident of a Southern soldier shooting a woman, and other persons that resented the fact that the villains of the story were deserters from a Connecticut regiment. The things that mankind resents and does not resent must make for the inextinguishable laughter of the gods. Among the letters Miss Marlowe received was one from General Henry K. Douglass, who had been on Stonewall Jackson's staff and rode with him through Frederick that day. He said:

As General Jackson and I passed a certain house, we saw three girls standing on a balcony, each waving a small Union flag at us. They were laughing, and what they did was more in a spirit of mischief than of bravado. General Jackson smiled up at them but said nothing.

About half a mile further on, he turned to me and said: "Douglass, you had better go back and stand by that balcony to see that no harm comes to those girls. One of the boys in the ranks might lose his temper and it wouldn't do for any harm to come to one of our Southern girls." And, so, I rode back and stood by the balcony. I had not been there ten minutes when an elderly woman came out on the balcony and said: "Come on in, girls, you have had enough fun for one morning." And the girls, giving one more flirt to their flags, laughingly went into the house.

That is the only incident of Union flag waving that morning in Frederick. Of that I am absolutely sure.

Yet, a son of General Reno wrote her that the incident as told by Whittier was substantially true

and that he had in his possession, inherited from his father, the flag that *Barbara Frietchie* waved. General Reno was in Frederick soon after, learned of the incident, went in person to thank *Barbara* and secured from her the flag, which he ever afterward treasured. There seems to be a plenitude of testimony that *Barbara* drove Confederate soldiers from her door-step on that day and kept a Union flag flying out of her window throughout the passage of the Confederates, but probably the rest of the story as utilized by Whittier is without foundation other than fancy, which always is at such times most fecund.

"And to-day," Miss Marlowe concluded, "after playing *Barbara* for nearly a year, I am compelled to admit that I am no nearer the truth on the main question than I was a year ago."

Slender are the threads upon which the dramatic structure hangs. The original intention had been to have *Barbara's* hair turn white from all her troubles, the death of her lover, her persecution by her fellow towns-people and the like, and then Jackson was to say:

"Who touches a hair of yon gray head," and so on. But Miss Marlowe found that the preparation with which her hair was to be turned "white in a single night as men's have grown from sudden fears" was injuring the hair and would ruin it. So, she cut out that part of the business and with it the most famous part of Jackson's reputed speech.

As a play, Mr. Fitch's work was variously esti-

mated. Some, like Booth Tarkington, thought it was bad and carried by only the art and insuperable charm of the actress. On this occasion Mr. Tarkington seemed to me a dramatic critic of much acumen. There were others that were greatly moved by the finale. Some said it was melodrama. Not as Miss Marlowe handled it, certainly. The records abound in tributes from many sources. To intrude a personal opinion, it has seemed to me that her career afforded no better proof of her gifts than the fact that she was able to clothe such a play with dignity and power and so to carry it into people's hearts and minds as a serious effort. Offhand, one would say that the change from "Shoot, if you must, this old gray head" to the appearance of a young lady uttering a modification of that well-worn line would upset all chance of verisimilitude. No audience that saw Julia Marlowe in this scene ever had the slightest impulse to be diverted but only to be moved deeply; and beyond this in acting it seems hardly possible to achieve.

Perhaps the dainty picture she made of the young Frederick girl in the early scenes and a certain premonition of coming disaster that she seemed to project even when she was drawing blameless mirth, laid the foundation of this final triumph. The premonition was surely there and just as surely it was all of her own devising. In the same indefinable way by which she indicated even in the earliest scenes the underlying and latent character of *Juliet* and by which she conveyed the underlying melancholy

of *Viola*, she foreshadowed the tragedy in this piece.

Her own life was not without its tragic element off the stage. For reasons not essential to this narrative, her marriage had not been happy. When Mr. Taber left her to begin his career in London, there had come, in fact, a separation between them and she now applied in the courts of Vermont for a divorce. It was granted, and she resumed legally, as she had before resumed on the playbills, the name of Julia Marlowe.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIGHT WITH AUGUSTIN DALY



HARLES BELMONT DAVIS, in that interesting book of his about his brother, Richard Harding Davis, mentions an incident that may serve as a text for the next necessary instalment of this chronicle. In 1889, as we have seen, Mr. Davis's father, L. Clarke Davis, was managing editor of the *Public Ledger*, then Philadelphia's strongest conservative newspaper. The Davis home, presided over by Rebecca Harding Davis, was the favorite resort of literary men, artists and famous actors.

"Augustin Daly usually came with at least three of the stars of his company, which I have already mentioned," writes Mr. Davis, "but even the beautiful Rehan and the never-old Mrs. Gilbert seemed thoroughly awed in the presence of 'The Guvnor.' He was a most crusty, dictatorial party, as I remember him, with his searching eyes and raven locks, always dressed in black and always failing to find virtue in any actor or actress not a member of his own company. I remember one particularly acrid discussion between him and my father in regard to Julia Marlowe, who was then making her first bow to

the public. Daly contended that in a few years the lady would be absolutely unheard of, and backed his opinion by betting a dinner for those present with my father that his judgment would prove correct."

To let this excerpt stand thus, alone and without explanation, would not be quite fair to the memory of a great figure in the history of the American stage. Mr. Davis's recollections, as he makes clear, are in this instance those of his boyhood and a boy might be unduly repelled by Mr. Daly's mannerisms. What is more to our purpose, Mr. Daly thought he had on this occasion good and sufficient reason to be cross; a fact that will be clear enough if we tell what had happened to him.

In that memorable first week in Philadelphia when Miss Marlowe, unheralded and unsung, had succeeded "Terry, the Swell" as the attraction at a barn, Mr. L. Clarke Davis had been induced by the unusual flavor of the notices she received to attend one of her performances. He saw at once, with the swift intelligence of a trained journalist, that back of such extraordinary acting must be both mind and character. George W. Childs was then the universally honored editor of the *Public Ledger*. Mr. Davis told him about his discoveries at the Broad Street. Mr. Childs went to see for himself, surrendered to *Rosalind* and invited her to visit the new *Public Ledger* building and office; an honor that he reserved for the city's most distinguished

visitors. Although contrary to her rule and practise, Miss Marlowe accepted the invitation and accompanied by Aunt Ada called upon the excellent old gentleman. With delight he showed her about the place and when she was going away, took from a cupboard in his office filled with such trophies, a cup, a saucer, and a silver spoon engraved with a picture of the building—a mark of his favor beyond which was no expression. With demure thanks she took the gifts, mentally placing the cup beside that red glass mug of her childhood and wondering that fate, which had so wide a variety of rewards in some ways, had such a paucity in others. From that time she was solemnly enrolled in the *Ledger* office as passed and approved.

At this time Mr. Daly was nearing the top of his remarkable career. He had begun obscurely as an underpaid newspaper reporter, had achieved after many efforts and discouragements a sudden and great success in play-writing and had risen rapidly and without defeat to a place as the most famous theatrical producer and manager of his time. He had his own theater, his own company of highly esteemed players, his own stars, his own pervading presence and indubitable prestige. Mr. Davis, it will be observed, says he was dictatorial; but some such reputation has been earned by most men that have conducted important enterprises to success. There is no doubt that his temperament was masterful; witness the peculiar rules he made for the conduct of his actors. They must not walk in Broadway,

day or night; they must not speak to him until he had spoken to them; they must not follow certain fashions in their attire; they must not do divers other things usually held to be the proud privileges of the sons of freedom. Here was a man that had tasted long and deep of an unexpected success. Human nature would not be human if such drafts had not bred in him much confidence in his own destiny and much doubt as to others.

With the press of New York he stood in a position of such advantage as often started bitter comment among managers less fortunate. A pleasing superstition was abroad in leading newspaper offices that Mr. Daly partook of royal attributes, at least to this extent, that in his productions he could make no error nor could anything be done better by anybody than by his company of talented and popular players. At times this amiable belief seemed to amount to a sacred writ. Mr. Daly was able, skilful, indomitably active, avid of success, and at once an expert and an artist in the principles of applied publicity. His attitude toward the writers of newspaper criticism was both friendly and commanding; toward some it took on the intimate relation of employer and employed. Thus one dramatic critic was engaged to write the prefaces and introductions to the Daly plays, when these were to be published; another was engaged to prepare the prompt-books for the Daly company; another to assist in the Daly theater's publicity work; another to paint the portrait of Miss Ada Rehan, the talented and

beautiful actress for many years Mr. Daly's leading lady.

In the spring of 1889, when all these conditions were most prosperous for him in New York, he took his company to Philadelphia to fill an engagement at the Chestnut Street Opera House in a play called "7—20—8." For some reason the charm of this piece that had captivated certain New York critics seemed less operative in Philadelphia. To "7—20—8" and its able performers neither writers nor public responded. The time happened to be that of which I have spoken in a former chapter, the second appearance of Miss Marlowe in Philadelphia. At the Chestnut Street Theater, on the opposite side of the way and within sight, she was achieving this phenomenal success. Crowded houses and long reviews for her; but no such pleasing tributes for "7—20—8." The upstart was playing mostly in plays that had been planned for Daly triumphs. It was only natural that Mr. Daly should feel incensed.

For the course he now pursued he had classical precedents, if he cared to think about such things. The laity seem to regard the jealousies of the stage as phenomenal as well as mightily amusing. In point of fact they do not differ from other human jealousies except in being sometimes more frank. When Phelps, the English actor, was at the height of his powers and almost of his fame, he was engaged by Macready to do leading parts in the Macready productions. When the season opened,

Phelps found himself left to twirl his thumbs. No parts were assigned to him; the plays went on without him. He stood this for a time and then sought his employer, thunder on his brow. Macready heard him patiently and then said:

"Why, of course, I am not going to let you play. I engaged you to keep you off the stage."

Phelps grumbled about the heavy expenses he had been under.

"How much are your expenses?" asked the great tragedian.

Phelps named an amount. Macready wrote him a check for it.

"But I am not going to let you play," he said.

The same thing happened in other cases. It happened again to Phelps with Charles Kean. The nature of his art throws the actor back upon himself to such an extent that unless he is of an unusual mentality the revolutions of the heavenly bodies soon seem to travel orbits contained within himself or otherwise negligible.

Despite a somewhat harsh aspect and a habit of curt speech that frightened the unwary, Mr. Daly was of a constant loyalty to his own people. In all sincerity, for example, he regarded Miss Rehan as certainly the greatest living actress and probably the greatest that had ever lived. He seems to have been unable to endure in silence the poignant results of the competition then going on across the width of Chestnut Street and was finally driven to complain to his friend Davis.



"Why do you make all this fuss about this Marlowe girl?" he said. "She is most ordinary."

Mr. Davis ventured to observe in his quiet way that he held a different opinion; that in his judgment Miss Marlowe was an actress of unusual merit, mentality, and power.

"She is nothing but a flash, I tell you," said Mr. Daly. "She is only one of these ambitious school-girls that think they can act when they can't. A year from now she will be utterly forgotten."

Mr. Davis said that he was convinced to the contrary.

"Then I tell you what I will do," cried Mr. Daly. "I will bet you a dinner at Delmonico's for as many persons as you care to invite that in one year from to-day that girl will have vanished from the stage and be forgotten."

Mr. Davis accepted the bet. Twelve months later he might have collected the wager and at the same time overwhelmed Mr. Daly with ridicule if he had wished to do so; for twelve months later Mr. Daly himself sat every night in the gallery of the Fifth Avenue Theater watching with sedulous care every motion and listening to every word of the ambitious schoolgirl that thought she could act when she could not.

But so strange are the operations of the human mind that it is quite likely the failure of his prophecy and even the memory of his dinner bet added acid to Mr. Daly's rancor. To an extent that will seem incredible among those unfamiliar with these rival-

ries, he became Miss Marlowe's bitter and unrelenting enemy and so continued until his death. He never saw her except upon the stage and never exchanged a word with her, but year after year he pursued her with insatiable hostility. The enmity was all on his side; the object of it only smiled and went imperturbably about her business, although she often suffered materially from a gratuitous ill-will that was exerted more perceptibly through Mr. Daly's superserviceable employees, penmen, or admirers than through Mr. Daly himself. There was at that time in the New York press what we called, for reasons I have sufficiently indicated, "the Daly clique." This was thereafter always against her. The word went out that Mr. Daly believed this young woman had been ridiculously overpraised. Critics that held to a different opinion had a noticeably chilly reception at the Daly headquarters. The two intimations were in most cases enough. Writers that had crowned Miss Marlowe's first creations as noble examples of a careful art now referred to her with cold and brief disparagement; and to newspaper men it will suffice to mention that in the journals most loyal to Mr. Daly even the customary advance notices of Marlowe performances were cast into the basket.

Chiefly because of this resolute enmity, for the next five years she avoided a city where it was seemingly impossible for her to have a fair hearing. She played in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee,



*Photograph by Ye Rose Studio*

IN "COLINETTE"—LAST ACT



St. Louis. Year after year, as we have seen, she was steadily enlarging her hold upon the public and rising in its estimation. She had won to an acknowledged place as the foremost American actress in legitimate drama. Instead of one week in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, she now played regular seasons of three to four weeks each. She played in Brooklyn, where there was no Daly organization and the press lavished praises upon her work. But she did not play in New York itself.

All the time she was the same unruffled mistress of herself and content to bide her time. I have labored in vain if I have not shown her to be gifted abundantly with what Macaulay calls "that nobler kind of courage that comes of reason and reflection." One that is right need not worry, was her view of the situation. If her work was veritable it could not be suppressed; if it was anything else, suppression was too good for it; and having faith in it, she looked upon New York as only a field postponed for conquest.

Time justified her confidence, if it also showed Mr. Daly to be unmollified. Soon after the beginning of the season of 1895-1896 the news was published that she was to appear before long in New York in her version of "Henry the Fourth." Immediately the Daly agencies announced that Mr. Daly would make a stupendous production of "Henry the Fourth" with Miss Rehan as *Prince Hal* and James Lewis as *Falstaff*. Interest in this news was great; theatrical critics were elated with

the thought that we were to have rival Madcaps jumping tavern doors at the same time on opposite sides of the same street. Something would be doing in those days! The fair hope, after a time, proved but fallacious. Mr. Daly had sought and obtained accurate information about the difficulties and disadvantages of this play. Nothing more was heard of his project, but the announcement had served to discourage some publicity for the other house. In a few days the fact was made known that before Miss Marlowe gave *Prince Hal* she would revive "Romeo and Juliet." Then the Daly agency gave notice that Mr. Daly would at the same time appeal to New York with an elaborate and unusual production of "Romeo and Juliet," Kyrle Bellew to be the *Romeo* and Mrs. James Brown Potter the *Juliet*.

This was in the nature of a master stroke. Kyrle Bellew was one of New York's favorite actors. He was handsome, intelligent, in all modern plays a master of his craft, and a figure of romantic interest because of his love-affairs. His appearance as *Romeo*, the ideal lover, was an event of extraordinary import. Mrs. James Brown Potter was then the most talked-about woman on the stage. Cora Urquahart was her maiden name; she was, or was reputed to be, of eminent social connections and when she entered upon the professional stage New York society was supposed to have fluttered. She had been seen in several modern plays in which she made a respectable success. Once she had essayed



*Cleopatra*, but never *Juliet*; and her advent in the part naturally aroused an unwonted animation in the pulse of New York.

For once, Mr. Daly's stars (in both senses) deceived him. Mrs. Potter failed as *Juliet*; Mr. Bellew was not successful as *Romeo*. The trouble with Mrs. Potter was quickly apparent to any formal capacity; with the preparation of a few weeks she was playing against a woman that had studied *Juliet* for years, lived in *Juliet's* atmosphere, absorbed *Juliet's* thoughts and bathed her very soul in *Juliet's* being. Even the Daly clique capitulated at this comparison. Besides, Mrs. Potter's style was eminently modern; when she applied it to Shakespeare it produced a singular artificiality quite unexpected to persons never considerate of the changes that in three hundred years have swept over the externals of English speech. It appeared that Mr. Daly himself, although of scholarly repute, had never thought of this potent fact. The truth seems to be that Shakespeare is a world by itself where one can easily open the door and look in but where one cannot move about as a citizen without naturalization. It was this that made the first and decisive difference between "Romeo and Juliet" at Daly's and "Romeo and Juliet" at Palmer's. Mr. Daly staged his production richly, but no magnificence of this kind could atone for obvious defects in acting and reading, and in a short time the play was withdrawn.

Miss Marlowe went to another theater and produced "Twelfth Night"; Mr. Daly revived "Twelfth

Night" at his theater with Miss Rehan in her favorite character of *Viola*.

The next season was the time of "For Bonnie Prince Charlie," the Scotch play described in a foregoing chapter. It was copyrighted: Miss Marlowe owned the sole copyright; but Mr. Daly offered in opposition another Scotch play, "Meg Merriles."

In 1899, after the run of "Valeska" at the Knickerbocker, Miss Marlowe, as we have seen, went upon the road for a short tour and it was announced that upon her return she would revive "As You Like It."

Mr. Daly at once countered with the proclamation of an elaborate and novel production of the same play at the same time. Again the theatrical news centers were pleasantly expectant of stirring things. We had had two *Juliets* in active rivalry, now we were to have two *Rosalinds* and two contests of stage-craft; for the Knickerbocker did nothing indifferently. But its management soon spoiled some of this pleasant outlook by quietly intimating to the news gatherers that Miss Marlowe had changed her mind and would produce something else. In the meantime they had telegraphed her and were awaiting her answer. They had said:

It will be necessary to substitute another play for "As You Like It" as Daly announces elaborate revival with special features for same week. Please wire your approval.

They seem to have been imperfectly acquainted with the woman with whom they were dealing. If they were in a blue funk, overcome by the mere mention of the Daly name, she was of no such rusticity. Some delay attended the delivery of the manager's message, for she was at the time at a rehearsal in New Orleans, but there was no delay about her response, and no uncertainty. She wired:

Absolutely not. I am going to do *Rosalind* exactly as announced. What do I care what this gentleman does? Let him come on. My withers are unwrung.

The production was therefore again announced at the Knickerbocker where various gentlemen had to pick up their courage as they could while the news people rubbed their hands over the renewed prospect of a fight. Two *Rosalinds* going at the same time and Daly against Frohman!

Mr. Daly's production, press and public were now adequately assured, would be found to be most unusual and before long it appeared in some respects likely to merit that word; at least it seemed so to wondering Shakespeareans. For example, Mr. Daly had in some way conceived the belief that the Forest of Arden was no creation of idyllic fancy but veritable and still existing. Arden meant Ardennes; the very woods in which *Rosalind* wandered and *Jacques* met fools still grew in Northern France. He therefore sent scene painters to the identical place to paint trees still standing there and come home and incor-

porate these in the scenery soon to be observed in Daly's "As You Like It." One can only suppose that Mr. Daly's usual wisdom failed him in this instance, for unfortunately the effort in realism struck the public as only comical and even a friendly press could scarce restrain a smile. "Why send a man to France to paint a tree that grows in our back yard?" asked one writer, and indeed it seemed from this point of view a wanton excursion.

Nothing bodes greater disaster to a serious dramatic performance than to have it shift into any butt of ridicule. Mr. Daly began badly and soon fared worse. The contest between the two *Rosalinds* was brief but decisive. The public quickly cast its vote in favor of *Rosalind* of the Knickerbocker. It was, in fact, a contest most unfair to *Rosalind* of Daly's. Without due preparation she was called from important modern rôles to interpret Shakespeare's most complex heroine and to speak some of Shakespeare's most difficult lines. No human being could have triumphed over such conditions, and it is no disparagement to the able actress and charming woman, compelled in this instance to attempt them, to admit that they were too difficult.

It was Mr. Daly's last move. The singular antipathy, amounting almost to a phobia, he had conceived against Miss Marlowe ended in the manner of futility that such obsessions usually conclude with. A short time after this incident Mr. Daly was himself fighting for his business life. The modern evolution began to seize upon even the theater; the

Trust that to many had seemed impossible came to dominate the business. Mr. Daly had been first skeptical of it, then hostile to it, and now paid the penalty by being virtually elbowed by it out of the field he had adorned so long. I have always believed the disappointment shortened a brilliant life. Renowned Daly's Theater, his creation and pride, passed into other hands, and three years later Miss Marlowe played upon its boards what the critics declared to be the greatest of her artistic successes.

## CHAPTER XV

### AN EXCURSION INTO THE ROMANTIC



FOR the mystery overhanging the public attitude toward Shakespeare, alike in this country and in England, no satisfying analysis is extant. It appears that having fixed his place secure among the immortals, proclaiming, even with heat, that he is the world's incomparable genius, the wonder of the ages, the greatest of all dramatists of all countries and times, many of us would have to be hired to witness one of his plays. We teach him sedulously in our schools; we cram the youthful mind with fragments of his lore; we applaud, when we happen to recognize it, an example of his wisdom or wit; and if we are to tolerate him on the stage the dose must be accompanied with collateral bribes and extraneous lures. The actor must be exceedingly famous so that not to see him is to brand one's self with igominy; or he must be advertised with a fascinating craft; or there must be novel and surpassing pictorial effects to be examined and discussed; or there must be two famous actors instead of one; or, at least, a benefit performance with an All-Star cast. But Shake-



speare as Shakespeare and for Shakespeare's sake, as drama and not as some form of social parade, leaves us cold, and if you wish the whole truth, a little impatient.

To this statement an exception is to be made. In every community in America exists one certain element of the unassailably loyal that will go to see any performance of Shakespeare that it believes will be tolerably adequate, and another element that having tried out its favorites in this field of endeavor will go to see them in whatsoever they do, whether a new thing or an old. The trouble is that no dramatic enterprise in these days can subsist upon these two elements. They are too few, and if we are to continue this strain of naked candor, too poor. To make Shakespeare a business success, which is absolutely necessary, there must be an appeal to the large element that does not really care for him but goes because of an innovation, a supreme reputation, a phenomenal power, a fashion or a personal interest in an actor it has seen in plays of another order—or maybe in the refined and delicate form of dramatic art to be found in moving pictures.

Many of Miss Marlowe's friends and many of the critics grumbled and fretted because she was not now playing Shakespeare. Some even went so far as to imagine a vain thing and say that she had given up the lofty ideals of her youth. They would have been silenced with a few pages of her ledger at the time of the co-starring misadventure. On December 7, 1896, she played at Detroit, Michigan, in "Romeo

and Juliet" to \$291.75, after she had been playing it eight years with unequaled acclaim. In Salt Lake City, October 14, 1896, she played to \$204.25, and in St. Louis, December 24, to \$258.25, but as this was the night before Christmas some allowance must be made for the time. In Chicago December 28, same year, she played "Romeo and Juliet" to \$354.25. On January 7, 1897, in Chicago, she played her great part of *Viola* in "Twelfth Night" to \$240.25. On January 12, "As You Like It" with her greatly admired *Rosalind* drew a total of \$222.50. At Cleveland the next week, "As You Like It" drew \$338. At Buffalo, January 25, "Romeo and Juliet" was supported by the public to the extent of \$302.25. At Pittsburgh, February 1, this play drew \$344.25. In Philadelphia "As You Like It" drew \$268. The week of March 8, 1897, she played in New York to a net loss of \$687.11. A week in Baltimore cost her \$389.69. The weekly expenses of the company averaged \$1,700, before any income could accrue to herself; with Shakespeare as the attraction, the public this year, and under the peculiar conditions that beset her, would not respond to that extent.

Not, certainly, so long as the co-starring arrangement might be retained.

A page from the blunt recitals of this ledger may be interesting not only as establishing these matters but as showing something of the expenses (and troubles) of a serious dramatic enterprise thirty years ago.

ACCOUNT FOR CURRENT WEEK ENDING MAY 15TH—  
SEASON 1896-97

1897			Receipts
May 10...	Philadelphia	As You Like It.....	\$268.00
" 11...	"	Twelfth Night.....	313.00
" 12...	"	Romeo and Juliet.....	384.00
" 13...	"	Romola .....	538.25
" 14...	"	Bonnie Prince .....	661.75
" 15...	"	Romeo and Juliet (mat.)...	286.25
" 15...	"	As You Like It (eve.)....	702.25
			<hr/> \$3,154.00

Share 50 per cent.....\$1,577.00

Salaries .....	\$ 1,130.00
Local printing .....	\$ 21.00
Share extra advt. ....	64.07
" Electric Sign .....	24.67
Extra stage hands .....	16.75
Supers .....	55.75
Ballet .....	22.00
Calcium .....	66.90
Transfer & Carriages .....	68.75
Singers 7.50, Musicians 6.00 .....	13.50
Gelder's bill 6.30, Property bills 5.45 .	11.75
Hauling frames 1.50, express	
Mr. T. 25c .....	1.75
Barron Money order .....	35.00
Hull's Expense acct. 3.55, Gray's	
acct. 75c .....	4.30
1 Wardrobe bot. ....	1.25
R. R. fares to Washington and 1 bag.	
car Phila. to Wash. and N. Y. ...	122.30

R. R. Phila. to Washington .....	4.50	
½ Payment storage bills .....	32.95	
		<hr/>
		567.19
		<hr/>
		\$ 1,697.19
		1,577.00
		<hr/>
Net Loss .....		\$ 120.19

For these disconsolate showings, which seem so rudely inconsistent with all her previous story of advancing fame, allowances are to be made. The time was that wherein her marriage and change of name had most spread disaffection in the public formerly hers of right; wherein, also, Mr. Taber was most unpopular. The first flush of her success had passed and she had no great novelty to offer. It was a time wherein for a season Shakespeare had even less than his usual regard. When all is said there remains the plain fact that the losses could not go on. To love Shakespeare is well, to play him in despite of public indifference is a noble thought; but to go to penury is exceedingly ill, and I have never read a description of a bankruptcy court that devotion to the muses could essentially lighten. "O Miss Marlowe, if you only would play Shakespeare again!" arose the fond chorus of her friends. "O sweet public, if only you would let her play it!" would have been a cry of better reason.

But in the straight way of our narrative again, "Barbara Frietchie" filled out the whole of the

season of 1899-1900. It had proved, as this fact indicates, marvelously popular—not on its merits as a play. Mr. Fitch, fair-minded gentleman no less than skilful dramatist, recognized that the actress more than the writer had done all this. When the piece came to be published in book form he made upon the title page this dedication:

To Julia Marlowe

How much *Barbara* and I both owe to you! You crept into her very heart (and mine!) and like the Good Fairy at the birth of the Princess, endowed her with her best gift, your own Personal Charm! How grateful I am I will try to prove by giving her to you after you yourself have made her dear to me.

CLYDE FITCH.

New York, 1900.

That same spring he was ill and went abroad for his health. From Carlsbad he wrote her this:

June 16, 1900.

Savoy Westend Hotel,  
"Villa Cleopatra"  
Carlsbad

My dear Julia:

I wonder where you are now and what you are doing? It bores and depresses me to think that *Barbara's* season is practically over, and that you are sort of *leaving* me! My young lady from Frederick is jealous of that Tudor girl from old England!

I saw a most delightful and splendid actress in Italy (where she is famous), Virginia Ritter, who reminded me

of you. (It was in Naples.) She plays something like you, has yr. coloring and hair, and some of yr. personality and "movement." But she did lack yr. delicacy of charm. She had a broader kind of fascination, and not so overwhelming as your Royal Highness.

What a delightful place Naples is, isn't it? So gay and so happy. And it is the only place I have even seen stage flowers and fruit actually growing. I had a beastly spring, half the time ill in bed, and it is especially miserable being ill in Hotel beds and *foreign* at that, but I finally staggered into this watery grave here and here I am now finishing my fourth wretched week. And O! what an existence. Up at 6 A. M. and all morning filling yr. inside with water. And all afternoon soaking yr. outsides. And walking up and down hills in between (& always in the rain) till a strip of level ground seems like "Home." In another week I go away, thank heaven, and at least a good deal better. I am off to Paris and London each for a few days, just to see once more what the real world is like, and then the English country to recuperate from these waterlogged days. I hear from a clever friend of mine in London that Duse has gone off in her acting, but I don't believe it. I also hear that ——'s success is really great and substantial, and I don't feel she deserves it.

It is time for some more *water*, so I must run away and soak. *Do* drop me a line just to say you are as well, as happy, and as *lovely* as ever; and believe me as always,

Yr. very devoted,

CLYDE FITCH.

*Barbara*, putting money into her purse, likewise broadened and strengthened her following, enlarged her own experience and added to her range



of power. If she lamented from time to time that she was not playing Shakespeare, the regret was vain. In every way the change was to her advantage, although she did not then perceive that it was. By bringing under her sway a new public and by building her reputation as a great emotional actress she was daily bettering herself for the greater Shakespearean achievements that were to come.

This is clear enough on reviewing the work of the next three seasons, work that seemed to take her always further from her chosen field and was always leading her around to it by a back road. For 1900-1901, "Barbara Frietchie" was revived for the first two months, after which she somewhat astonished the theatrical world with a novelty that sprang at once into a phenomenal favor, possible only in the psychology of the moment, which happened to be peculiar.

It was the time when the romantic, historical, and then the swashbuckling novel had swept from a fashion to a passion. Succeeding generations will never understand the evolution of this but will look with awe upon the results—in money and sometimes in product. The sudden popular appetite for a hero that wore metal trousers and fought everybody and everything was insatiable. In the end it degenerated into mere extravagance, so that one looked for another Cervantes to laugh it out of its stodgy life; but at the beginning it was a taste genuine and rather good. History was ransacked to find characters fit for romances of the sword, and if some of

these when found were used in a way to make historians snort others were not without some light and some warrant.

On the rising flood in this odd epoch of American literature, Mr. Charles Major, an Indiana lawyer, put forth a story that eventually, and for other reasons than its own modest merits, topped the popularity of all the others. Vicariously, one may say, it even made him for a time a conspicuous figure on the horizon of letters. "When Knighthood was in Flower" was its reverberating and poetic name and it had to do with the adventures (largely supposititious) of Mary Tudor, sister of Henry the Eighth, king of England. Several persons, including Mr. Major, were impressed with the belief that the book had dramatic possibilities and negotiations started that ended in nothing, Mr. Major being in no hurry to part with his play rights. While he was deliberating Miss Marlowe came to Indianapolis. He saw her play *Rosalind*, and the thought came to him that this was the actress to play his *Mary*. The connection seems obscure but perhaps it is to be explained by the suggestion of opposites. *Rosalind* suggested *Mary Tudor* because she was so different.

Overtures were begun to Miss Marlowe, who received a copy of the book and eyed it askance. After she had struggled with it for a time she sent it to me with a note expressive of doubt, which I was at pains to reinforce. Nothing is so comical after the event as the confident forecast. I ad-



*Photograph by W. A. Sands*

*Mary Tudor*  
(“When Knighthood Was in Flower”)



vised strongly that search for a vehicle be made in another quarter because the man that could make a tolerable drama out of that mass of fustian could transmute the metals and then he would not have to make plays for a living. It was not long before this prophet's words also to scorn were scattered. The importunities continuing and being insistent, a dramatization was prepared and submitted. The name of the author I do not now recall. His offering might have been perfectly grand for somebody else, but for Miss Marlowe it was manifestly impossible, and the task was next intrusted to Paul Kester. That Mr. Kester is a great dramatist is a proposition that I am prepared to maintain against all comers. I have here the proof. He took this balderdash, and made of it a play that Miss Marlowe could accept, that became immensely popular and that made a poor book attractive. Beyond this genius could hardly achieve. After people had seen the play they rushed away to buy the book. Maybe they wished to see how much worse the book was. In that case it is safe to say they were satisfied.

*Mary Tudor* of the story was something of a hoyden, fascinatingly unconventional, the heroine of a good love romance, pert, saucy, ready of wit and vigorous of action. Historical atmosphere being happily and by his own confession nothing that concerned Mr. Major, the young lady was in fact an American boarding-school girl, transported to the court of a solemn sided, rather fatuous, and usually bellowing king. Nothing could be devised

better calculated to tickle the public fancy. "A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur" rather paled by comparison with this daring conceit. In popular phrase this clever, whimsical and audacious young person told a crowned king where he got off and nightly the audience went wild with enthusiasm at the telling.

"The king, the king, the king! Lord bless my soul—is he the only man in England?" was one of her lines. When she said it with a certain sliding circumflex on "man" the audience loved her.

There was a wildly funny scene where, in a rage with her royal brother, she throws the furnishings of the palace chamber about her and ends by kicking a cushion to the top of the clock. We may admit at once that this was not seemly comporting for one that had played *Juliet* and *Imogen*; but it was intensely amusing. "If this is what they want, this is what they shall have," said the transformed *Juliet*, and kicked the cushion over the door instead of over the clock. But with all the comedy that nightly swept the theater with gales of laughter, she carried off the serious scenes with the fullness of her accustomed power. *Mary Tudor* in fact, had in her some of all the parts she had played. It was in stage speech the "starriest" heroine ever placed upon the stage. Virtually, it was a monologue. One scene had in it a chance for her own subtle manner of conveying ideas. Because of untoward conditions at the court *Mary Tudor* elopes with her lover, *Charles Brandon*. They are pursued and she must



don man's attire to escape. *Brandon* tells her to imitate him in his manner of speech. They are at an inn in Bristol, hoping to get shipping for the continent. The waiter brings in a repast. *Brandon* bangs the flat of his sword upon the table and roars, "What, fellow, is this all?" signing her to do the like. "What, fellow, is this all?" she pipes and makes a bungling attempt with the sword, but manages to put into those words a certain note of weariness and fright that is an overwhelming reminder of her femininity—and when all is done and we are home, of her art.

One phase of this divertissement curiously reflected her real mental state at this time. For her "Romeo and Juliet" Edwin Howard, her music director, the astute delineator of *Francis* in "Henry the Fourth," had provided the best incidental music that had been heard in this country with such a play. It was perfectly adapted to the significance of each scene, effective but never intrusive. Miss Marlowe now took some of these exquisite airs, had them transposed and played them in jig time to the rollicking scenes of "Knighthood." Here was sly revenge upon those that recognized them. Besides, it saved her own soul with the only protest she could make.

This was the greatest popular success she had so far achieved. The piece ran for six months in New York, a wonderful run for those days, and might have gone for a year. Money began to flow in upon her; after a few weeks she had a surplus of \$50,000 to put away. On the road she played everywhere to

standing room only; sometimes the houses were sold out a week in advance, and the season ended with fame, fortune, and all dates billed for another year. Part of her profits she expended upon a house she built on a view-point in the Catskills. A home had been one of the dreams of her life, a place where she could find rest, a harbor of refuge from the world, and shelf-room for her growing collection of books. She imagined now she had come to the fulfillment of that delightful dream, and that summer of 1901 she passed in her new house at Highmount.

Persons in other walks of life have a presumptive right to live without being lied about, but when we come to the stage any invention seems to be regarded as legitimate. While she was thus resting and reading in the peaceful shade of Highmount, there appeared and went the rounds of the press an alleged interview with her in which she was credited with the following astounding statement:

I am going to make a change. I am under contract to present "When Knighthood was in Flower," and I shall give this play next season. After that I am going to play your *Sapphos* and your *Zazas*. Why? Simply because I am tired of goody-goody dramas and I want to make a change.

She had given no interview to anybody and had never dreamed of entertaining the thoughts this imaginative flight ascribed to her. It was, in fact, what the late William C. Whitney was wont to call

a convincing illustration of the freedom of the press. So fixed is the habit of the American people to believe whatever they may see in a newspaper that the gross nature of this impossible invention was not detected, as one might think it should have been, and the public was shocked at the news of the apparent defection of the one actress in whose character it had preserved the greatest faith. It was necessary for Miss Marlowe to break through her usual custom, to issue a denial of the alleged interview, and to reaffirm her unalterable adherence to the course she had always pursued on the stage, "the presentation of those things that are truest in life as well as all that is most beautiful in art."

She might have continued to play "When Knighthood was in Flower" for years, might have made a great fortune from it, might have become welded to it in the public mind as poor Frank Mayo became to "Davy Crockett." All the next season, 1901-1902, she continued her *Mary Tudor* before a public that showed no signs of weariness of it. At the expense of her preferences she was complying with the necessities of the situation while she augmented her fortune. The piece made severe demands upon her physical strength; it required her to be nearly always on the stage and nearly always acting with energy. She felt that the strain was too much, and at the end of the second season was resolved to undergo it no more. If she had estimated life in dollars, she might have parted with a certain regret from "Knighthood." This was the play that freed her

from harassing concern about her future and rendered her, in a business way, independent.

The summer of 1902 she spent at Bad Nauheim, in Germany, where she took the "cure" and was much benefited in health. Most of her spare time she devoted to a study of Hauptmann's "Sunken Bell," to which she was powerfully attracted and which she was determined to play, for the sake of its somber mysticism. This made a deep impression upon her and maybe warped her judgment of it as a drama for public consumption. If she could have found any encouragement from managers she would have brought it out the following season; but the mind managerial failed to warm to a piece so far from the Bowery. One day in New York she encountered one of this guild that was reputed to be in habits and attainments more than usually the scholar.

"I've been reading 'The Sunken Bell,' " she said. "I want to do it. You know it, of course."

"The Sunken what?"

" 'The Sunken Bell.' Hauptmann's great play."

"Ah yes—"The Sunken Bell.' I don't think I know that play."

"Let me read you some of it," said this enthusiastic young person and brought out a copy, which she usually carried around with her. "Now, this is the Second Act," she said, and waded into it. As she read her glorying rose in the lines she conceived to be so splendid. She was far gone in the mystic beauties of *Rautendelein's* speeches when she began

to be aware of a regularly recurrent sound at her side. She looked around. The scholar-manager was asleep and snoring.

She arose in disgust and tiptoed out of the office.

It must be acknowledged that he was not the only person on whom these wonders seemed to be wasted. To more than one of her advisers the profound symbolism she found in *Rautendelein* was but incomprehensible stuff and they were sure the public would look upon it with an even greater weariness.

Still, she was resolved to break away from the thralldom to "Knighthood," which had become more than irksome to her for it seemed to disclose a monster to which she might be chained henceforth and forever more. To find a substitute that should release her from the shadow of this death was easy to resolve and hard to do. It is astonishing to think that in a country where every tenth person was writing a play, or sketching one, there should be no plays that could be acted or were anything but frivol. The fact does not seem to be in nature but is attested, nevertheless. Months of search in America and abroad had yielded nothing but disappointment, when of a sudden she came upon a play by Catulle Mendès that seemed to hold forth the bow of promise.

It was what might be called a specimen of the slightly historical drama. "Queen Fiametta" was the title; the person concerned was supposed to be a ruler of Bologna in the Middle Ages. Some rather clever comedy was provided by a scene

wherein the queen retires for a brief season to a nunnery and innocently diverts the minds of the inmates with reflections of the great world; and there was, too, a strong tragedy interest. It had been a great success in Paris, but Miss Marlowe never felt greatly drawn to it. Her misgiving must have been prophetic; the choice of the play, for a strange reason, was soon proved to be unfortunate.

The first production was in Boston. A short time before the date there appeared in American newspapers and particularly in Boston an account of Catulle Mendès, his manner of living and his views of life that shocked everybody with scruples about morals and conventions. Above all, he was declared to be an enemy of religion. Now it happened that in his play the element of evil was contributed by a cardinal. Instantly a considerable part of the public leaped to the conclusion that this was Mendès's way of attacking the church. I hardly have need to say that such a thought had never entered Miss Marlowe's head and she was greatly astonished and grieved when she found the objection raised. Some persons in Boston went so far as to petition the mayor that the performance be stopped. The newspaper criticisms of the piece had not been unfavorable, although it was generally felt that it was not of large enough caliber to suit Miss Marlowe, and the attendance had been good. The management felt that it might easily proceed with the play and live down the storm of protest, but Miss Marlowe had no willingness to offend the religious prejudices



of any part of her fellow citizenship. She therefore determined to withdraw the piece and seek another vehicle.

Just at this time her health, probably affected by the worry and disappointment, collapsed under her. From Boston the company had gone to Providence. In her hotel one morning she had called her manager, who was in New York, on the long distance telephone, and was about to talk to him, when she suddenly fainted and fell to the floor, pulling the telephone from the wall upon her. After that no question was left of what she should do. The tour was canceled and Miss Marlowe sought a time of rest.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kester had been diligently at work upon a novel of George W. Cable's, a war story called "The Cavalier," and about this time he had it ready. Early in November it was put in rehearsal and the first performance took place at New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 1902. The story is of a Southern girl that gives her heart to a man in a Confederate uniform and supposed to be a Confederate officer. In reality he is a double traitor; he betrays for money both sides in the conflict. The gradual revelation of his perfidy and the wrecking of the heroine's hopes are the plot. She goes to the front and there is one scene where in a box car made into a telegraph office, Julia Marlowe had the first opportunity of her career to utilize what she had learned as a girl in the telegraph school at Cincinnati. The regular operator being sick or

shot or something, the heroine in the emergency must click out a message herself, a message upon which the plot turns, and Miss Marlowe astonished the telegraphers in the audience by clicking it out correctly.

The play was not much. Various experts took a hand in trying to provide it with the dramatic fervor the book lacked; George Middleton, among them, and even Charles Frohman himself. The trouble was that Mr. Cable wrote masterfully for the closet, but his methods, delightful to the reader, were untranslatable upon the stage. There was neither compelling incident nor compelling character development. But the public mildly accepted "The Cavalier," and so did some of the critics. All acknowledged that as usual Miss Marlowe made the most of the part she played, brought to it study and intelligence and was a charming *Charlotte Oliver*; but the judicious grieved that she was wasting her time upon things beneath the dignity of her gifts. As before, they never understood that the choice was not hers.

"The Cavalier," by some tolerance of the gods, ran out that season, 1902-1903, coining money as it went, and reaping other profits than those that showed in the bank balance. With every such play the actress continued to enlarge her hold upon the public favor. While she was multiplying the evidences of her wide range of abilities she added always to that constituency of proselytes that we saw to begin with "Valeska," a constituency now glad

to have a chance to see her in anything. If she were to play a waiting gentlewoman or any trivial part many persons would go to see her for the sake of the picture she made, as people paid once to hear Sarah Bernhardt recite the French alphabet.

The next season, 1903-1904, took her into a different field. Henry Esmond was at that time a popular English playwright. His "When We Were Twenty-One," had been a great success in the United States, and he had now other plays for the same market. Miss Marlowe's manager sent her a deck-load of drama for her inspection. In the mass she found a piece of Esmond's called "Fools of Nature" that seemed at least possible, a particular wherein it differed from about a cord and a half of other offerings she had patiently plowed through. For myself, I always thought "Fools of Nature" to be of the order of trunk lining, and taken from the bottom at that; but a part of the public seemed to have a different impression. It might be described by the unsympathetic as a mild and comparatively innocuous forerunner of the drama that afterward held so large a place on the stage; that is to say, it was constructed on the general theory that sex promptings are an imperious master and a law unto themselves. This was greatly refined and assiduously clothed before Miss Marlowe interpreted it, but was still the play's implication.

The success was nothing to boast of; but what seemed to be shown clearly enough was that the public would not become enthusiastic over such a

theme in such hands, and after a few weeks "Fools of Nature" ended its exotic career. It was followed with a revival of "When Knighthood was in Flower," and at once she began again to play everywhere to standing room only. No end appeared to the potent charm of this piece of fictional punk. In New York, at the Empire Theater, she felt obliged, the season nearing its end and warm weather appearing, to save her physical strength by alternating Mr. Major's poor contraption with something easier. She chose to revive "Ingomar," and wonder of wonders! she made it go. It was a feat that the Angel Gabriel could hardly duplicate now and made all the old-timers stare even then. If "Ingomar" had been deemed impossible in 1887 what must it have become in New York in 1904? Imagine to-day some one striding about the stage and emitting all that stilted nonsense! We should pelt him to the wings. People did not pelt Miss Marlowe to the wings in 1904 but only came night after night and seemed immeasurably to enjoy themselves. I am sure that this fact will some day be landmarked into the traditions of the stage and be wondered at as now we wonder that another generation was able to sit through "Venice Preserved."

She was close to the end of her trials about plays and playwrights. The public's peculiar psychology toward Shakespeare no one knew better than she; and long had she turned over in her mind possibilities of some new combination that would provide the attraction of a novelty and still insure the utmost

efficiency and artistic worth. Of a sudden she thought she had found what she sought and went to Mr. Frohman with the suggestion. He saw at a glance the great possibilities it contained, adopted it with joy and prepared to put it to practice for the next season, that of 1904-1905.

While she was still playing at the Empire in this engagement, James Huneker produced in the *New York Sun* a long and carefully weighed estimate of her and her work and methods. "Make way for Julia Marlowe—Julia of 'the mighty line!' " he cried, and concluded that "this actress with the royal mien and an art of exceeding opulence," was the only one of her times that could have played "Knighthood" and made it seem at once plausible, fascinating, and worthy. "She is a creature apart on the English speaking stage," he wrote. "There is not a woman player in America or in England that is—attractively considered—fit to unlace her shoe. One must go to Paris, Berlin, Vienna, or Rome to find her peer."

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE RETURN



EDWARD HUGH SOTHERN, careful, conscientious, and talented actor, who had won in America to a place in public esteem equal to that once held by his celebrated father, had laid in high-class modern comedy the corner-stone of his reputation. Yet he had always looked beyond this to achievements in the classical and standard drama, and above all, in Shakespeare, of which he also was a devout student. In 1900 he had begun to carry out a long cherished ambition by producing "Hamlet" in a manner so artistic and satisfying as to compel the attention of the scholars and the applause of the critics. He had been subjected, almost at the outset, to singular misfortunes. In the first week of his first appearance in "Hamlet," playing at the Garden Theater, New York, while in the fencing scene with *Laertes*, the point of *Laertes'* foil, being driven downward, pierced Mr. Sothern's right foot. Blood poisoning followed, he must go to a hospital, and his tour must be canceled before it had fairly begun.

Actors are harsh to one another in prosperity; in times of trouble they have a ready and generous sympathy. Many of them sent Mr. Sothern letters



of regret and encouragement. Miss Marlowe sent one, for she had been struck with the singular and undeserved disaster fallen upon so excellent an endeavor. Not long after, Mr. Sothern, recovering, had been able to resume his tour, his entire production, upon which he had expended all his capital, was destroyed in the burning of the Grand Opera House in Cincinnati, the lives of the company and of a part of the audience being saved by Mr. Sothern's coolness and ready wit. Henry Miller, who had once done "Hamlet," wired an offer of his scenery, and two nights later the company was able to resume playing at a lecture hall. This evidence of pluck in the face of overwhelming disaster won the admiring attention of the theatrical world and Mr. Sothern was everywhere applauded. From the beginning he had been managed by Daniel Frohman. The "Hamlet" venture had been an artistic success, but he was still wise enough not to confine himself to the one play. A repertoire of romantic and popular dramas kept all his old following.

The idea of a combination with another great player had been suggested to Miss Marlowe early in her career. As we have seen, only the untimely deaths of Mr. Booth and Mr. Barrett prevented her appearance, at the time of the Chicago World's Fair, in a combination that would have been of unusual moment. When she had been but two years on the stage Richard Mansfield desired to arrange a joint starring tour with her. Later, Beerbohm Tree and George Alexander, at different times,

urged similar proposals. The advantages of such combinations had been proved by the long and brilliant record of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, by the success of Booth and Barrett and later of Booth, Barrett and Mme. Modjeska. They provided the sauce of novelty that the public must have when it takes its Shakespeare; and, of course, brought together two clienteles, or three, instead of but one.

The danger and the drawback lay in an artistic partnership with an actor of different ideals, different methods of production and different attitude towards Shakespeare. Out of these something might come worse than merely irksome to one of clear convictions and sensitive soul. About this time Miss Marlowe saw Mr. Sothern act in "Hamlet." She was impressed with the reverent attitude, scholarly discrimination and evidences of research and of conscience that marked every part of the performance. With the ready intuition of a fellow student she saw that only a Shakespearean could have made such a production and he an analogue to the spirit that moved her own efforts. She divined also that he must have character; the intention was so fine, his ambition, like hers, could be satisfied with only the highest endeavor. She felt that she could trust such an artist. It was then that she went to Mr. Frohman with her great suggestion—a joint tour by Julia Marlowe and E. H. Sothern!—and he fired up with an unwonted enthusiasm about it. Not for the moment only; he gave it enduring and wisely sympathetic support; he helped materially to make

it go. "It is the only offering I have ever thought to make in the theater," said he, "that needed no advertising, no publicity, and no effort to introduce."

He was speaking and dealing in behalf of the Syndicate. The Syndicate was now all in all.

The tour was planned to begin in Chicago, September 19, 1904, with an imposing revival of "Romeo and Juliet." Mr. Sothern had never played *Romeo* but was eager to try it. Mr. Frohman left everything relating to the artistic side of the productions to his new stars. Miss Marlowe's prompt-books were used for the plays that she had done; Mr. Sothern's prompt-book was used for "Hamlet." From the beginning they found themselves working in an atmosphere of rare but grateful harmony. They started with an asset; there was sincere goodwill on both sides. Then they agreed in aim and theory and had respect for each other's recorded achievements. It sounds too good to be true, but with this ideal equipment, Temperament, that queer Old Man of the Sea, never plied his business of wreckage on this craft.

It was a condition, one must say, as unusual as benign. Many years ago Lawrence Barrett and E. L. Davenport undertook a similar co-starring venture. It is related that the contract between them, after carefully providing that each should have the same quality of dressing-room, the same diligence of attendance and the same supply of hot water, stipulated that one half of the bills to be displayed should read "Lawrence Barrett and E. L. Daven-

port," and one half should read "E. L. Davenport and Lawrence Barrett" and that in each town exactly the same number of each style of bill should be exhibited. Before the combination had existed two weeks the stars were not on speaking terms and the supporting players were divided into hostile camps from which they emerged only to play and to glare at one another. In other words, man in a state of nature. When the company arrived at a new town, young gentlemen representing each camp took carriage and went about (separately) with pad and pencil counting each variety of bill. If the total showed a preponderance of either, woe was sure to fall soon or late upon the head of that unlucky manager and to be passed (with additions) to the wretched bill-sticker.

A conspicuous exception of course, to the discord that usually rules these partnership affairs, and from which Miss Marlowe herself had bitterly suffered, was the association of Booth and Barrett; but it was always said that nobody could quarrel with Edwin Booth, and in the days of his work with Mr. Barrett his spirit was weary and he left all to his partner.

The rehearsals for the Sothern-Marlowe tour proceeded in Chicago. Rehearsals are a feature of an actor's life that Miss Marlowe for all her tireless industry has never regarded with rapture, while Mr. Sothern was reputed to have for them an appetite unappeasable. It was long said of him that he would rather rehearse than act and much rather

rehearse than dine. The birds of ill-omen, always super-abundant, and usually fatuous, had foretold this as the wedge that would drive the combination asunder. Instead of dissension the rehearsals developed only the fact that the two actors had about the same ideas as to how things should be done and were equally selfless about the doing. Miss Marlowe directed the production of "Romeo and Juliet" and Mr. Sothern that of "Hamlet." When one was on the stage in a scene the other sat in the auditorium and made notes for suggestions. The Syndicate being back of the productions, there was no haggling about expense, and the scale chosen was of a surpassing magnificence. All the costumes and scenery were new and some of the painted sets were gorgeous pictures.

Mr. Sothern was advantaged with every requisite for success in Shakespearean delineation; excellent voice, a fine intelligence, graceful bearing, the mind and habits of a student, an unusual command of all the resources of the actor's art and of the machinery of the stage. But even beyond all these he had deep and serious convictions about acting and its relations to life; he had honest and reasoned respect for his calling. It is not usual to find this attitude in actors, whose mental processes, according to eminent authorities, tend, in these days at least, to cynicism and indifference. Mr. Sothern believed with all his mind and all his soul that acting was in all ways as worthy as any other art, as valuable to mankind, as much of an ethical agent; and he may be said to have



devoted himself with fervor to the exposition of this faith. His youthful training and experiences must have helped him to his conclusions, which were singularly in harmony with Miss Marlowe's. His father had designed him for a career as a painter. He had therefore studied with care the principles of art and before his maturity had visited and carefully noted all the great galleries of Europe. From this tuition he emerged with not only a grasp of the pictorial side of the stage effects that was afterward invaluable to him but with broad and firm notions of the part that all art must play in civilization.

The depth of this equipment was reflected in the great stage pictures he made for all the productions now in hand, as it was to be reflected afterward in many others. In effects of light and color he seemed to go beyond anything known before his time, and if you speak of enthusiasm, he had enough for an army. Not spasmodic; the steady, day and night, indefatigable enthusiasm that builds empires and conquers theatrical situations.

In the way of rehearsals, there were those in the supporting company that sometimes wished his enthusiasm could be restrained or mitigated. He would become so absorbed in the work before him that time meant little and the frailties of flesh still less. At Chicago the rehearsals took place at the new and beautiful Illinois Theater, then occupied at night by some variety of musical comedy, I think. They began at ten o'clock in the morning and were



supposed to suspend at noon for luncheon. One day, Mr. Sothern, intent upon getting a phase of the work filed down to perfection, forgot all about this excellent arrangement. Twelve o'clock came, twelve-thirty, one o'clock, and still he toiled on, instructing and repeating. Famine stared in the faces of the waiting support. They liked Mr. Sothern too well to make a protest, but the pangs of hunger were not to be assuaged with good-will. One scene in the musical comedy that held the boards that week required snow on the roofs, and the management had experimented with a novel material in the way of producing a truly wintry landscape. Members of the Sothern-Marlowe company, wandering about the stage while the rehearsal went ever on and showed no signs of stopping, came upon a barrel filled with a familiar white substance.

"Gosh! Oh, look what's here," cried one of the royal court of Denmark, and thrust a hand into the barrel. It was pop-corn and the courtiers and ladies hastened to assuage hunger's deadly pangs with handfuls of the crisp white provender.

There was no rehearsal that afternoon, but considerable alarm and some medical attention. A feature about the pop-corn had been overlooked. The ever-careful fire department of Chicago had insisted that it be thoroughly fire-proofed.

The first performance of the joint stars drew the earnest attention of the community. A capacity audience was assured a week before the day arrived. The audience was so exceptional as to make head-

lines in the society columns. An equal number of well-known persons had not in many years been gathered in a Chicago assembly. The elements of the city's life that strove for the advancement of art and education responded with joy. It seemed as if the return of Julia Marlowe to her chosen field of endeavor was hailed by all the region around as some personal good fortune. The reception Mr. Sothern and she had of this remarkable gathering was of a kind to demonstrate the hold they already had upon the affectionate esteem of the thoughtful. It was recorded by the press the next day that there were thirty-one curtain calls.

The quality of the achievement was less satisfying to the principals than to their friends. Theatrical perfection is a matter of reiteration; their ideals were not to be had in an instant. That initial performance, besides, was beset with difficulties not apparent to the laity. The first conjunction of actors all new to one another could not be without rough edges. Time must be had for the welding into an admirable whole. It was also noted by some persons on the first night that an unwelcome flavor of the modern persisted in a *Juliet* that aforetime had been of a flawless classicism. This was no more than was to be expected after so long an excursion in alien ways; but what was strange was that which happened next. For as surely as anything in this world can be sure, the modernity wore off the next night, disappeared the next, and thereafter to the end of the week she was back again in Verona. I

was there, I saw it all, it happened just as I am telling it. I was far from being the only person that observed this almost magical transformation. Barrett Eastman, whose scholarship entitled him to speak with authority, wrote of that first night:

It must be admitted that neither Miss Marlowe nor Mr. Sothern appeared to the best advantage on that occasion, but each of them has a record of so much worthy and distinguished endeavor and accomplishment that both were entitled to a suspension of judgment at least. It was plain to anybody with any discrimination that they were not doing themselves justice and that it was very unfair to pass judgment upon them at that time. All this was demonstrated the very next night when a truly marvelous improvement was shown and night by night the improvement continued.

To some of her friends it seemed that when her spirit succeeded in shaking off the shackles of "Knighthood" and similar modern devices it soared up to better things than she had ever done before, as if she were conscious at last of freedom and rejoicing in it. On Monday night her work seemed a little finical and studied; it lacked the spontaneous verve that had been her characteristic. By Thursday night all this had returned in its most convincing power. She put into the earlier scenes a feeling of happiness and innocent playfulness that seemed to go beyond anything she had done before and reflected a new hold on her art; and certainly she had never been more moving than she was that night in the Potion Scene, to which she now built with a

steady access of power that seemed to indicate she had been studying *Juliet* when she was playing *Mary Tudor*. W. L. Hubbard wrote of it as "the noble portrayal of a great rôle," and as revealing "the joy of a splendid dramatic talent's release from bondage," and this seemed to her jubilant admirers the just recording of a neoteric psychological fact.

"Romeo and Juliet" occupied all the first week. On Monday night, September 27, Miss Marlowe returned to "Much Ado About Nothing" in a careful production that the next morning was called a triumph scenically and in acting. Several years had elapsed since her decision to lay it aside until she should have grown up to it. In the meantime she had given to it thought, a probing inquiry, and an occasional testing on the stage. It was her custom to carry with her a small book case built in the shape of a trunk that it might be easily transported. In this she kept the volumes of the *Variorum* (as fast as they appeared), and other works pertaining to Shakespeare. With such help, she had reviewed and many times revised her first prompt-book on "Much Ado" until she felt she had found and absorbed that authority that once she lacked, or had thought she lacked. Her friends and the critics were ready to agree with her about this after they had observed the new *Beatrice*. I could not see that the business or byplay of the part had greatly changed, but what was clear was that development had been along the line of her favorite theory. She had been looking deeply into the vocalization.

In my reportorial days in New York I used to know an old police court justice that could shut his eyes and from only voice tones determine whether a witness was telling a reasonable quantity of truth, telling half-truths or telling lies. Joseph Pulitzer, the genius of the *New York World*, nearly blind and because he was so, had developed a faculty by which he could read meanings in the tones of one talking to him more easily than he could ever divine anything from the human countenance. Julia Marlowe, in her studies of voice management had come upon the other end of these phenomena. She saw that if the voice could unconsciously compass such a range of significance it could be consciously managed to do even greater things, and her first study was to get the secrets of that management. Now, *Beatrice* is a part that bristles with difficulties. So the most of them she scaled with her voice.

Act V, Scene 2:

*Beatrice.* Kill *Claudio*! . . . Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancor—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place!

She means it; she has that much of tigress in her underneath all her wit and gaiety and assured good grace of manner. But if she is played so that this quality bursts of a sudden from the lips of a lady

whose chief attainment is in persiflage, there will be no more conviction in the playing than there is in a stewed prune. From the first *Beatrice* must be played as a woman of unusual capacity, with an indicated strength of character back of all her wit. There is only one real way to do this so it will count—again the voice, the omnipotent voice!

Similarly, it is necessary to indicate in the first scene of the First Act and indicate it with inspired strokes, that beyond any consciousness of her own, against any will of her own, *Beatrice* has a penchant for *Benedict*, and yet to paint it so that the audience will catch the suggestion of it and not so that *Benedict* will seem a clod for not suspecting it. Well, here is a chance for occult art if any such be in Shakespeare—or elsewhere, if you come to that.

I pray you is Signor Montanto returned from the wars or no?

This is *Beatrice's* first line. The lingering touch she put upon "Montanto" was not all ironic, as it used to be. It had now a certain shaded suggestion of good-will and aided by the manner in which she put herself forward to make the question conveyed to the audience the first intimation of her real state of mind.

The tempo of the first scene seemed a trifle slow and slower than we were accustomed to, but was purposely made so to afford the necessary contrast to the tense scenes in the church and afterward



where the fierce and almost barbaric side of *Beatrice's* nature is shown. When she came to that "O that I were a man!" she swept everything before her in a torrent of sustained passion.

*Benedict.* Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

*Beatrice.* Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

The tones in which she clothed this line seemed compact of womanly tenderness and grief. It was when she perceived how villainously *Hero* had been wronged that indignation rose in her voice to strangle the sorrowful keys. Her swift striding to and fro as she upbraided *Claudio* and stung *Benedict* to wrath like her own, the graceful and eloquent language of hand, face, foot, however appropriate, significant, convincing all these, were secondary to utterance.

Mr. Sothern's *Benedict*, seen for the first time that night, shared in the ovation and deserved no less. He was a man worth knowing, this *Benedict*, fit mate for this *Beatrice*; a lover that had both resolution and refinement, a soldier with a certain commanding and admirable keenness of intellect, a certain unstudied readiness of wit; and he flavored this wit to our liking with a delicate and sub-acid suggestion of cynicism, kindly and sprightly, such as even good-tempered men of the world sometimes acquire in their own despite.

The next Monday night, October 4, saw the production of "Hamlet," and Miss Marlowe's first ap-

pearance as *Ophelia*. It is not usually viewed as anything for a great actress, and in advance Miss Marlowe was deemed in august quarters to have made in accepting it only another concession to partnership. These and all others were surprised to find that in her hands it had become one of her greatest portrayals and a character study of victorious strength. She had been about her books; that was all. The inspirational genius that is supposed to perceive character traits in one lightning flash and reconvey them in another could never have vivified this *Ophelia* for us; it was self-evident that so unusual a revelation of things never before suspected must have been long matured and deeply considered. The critics felt and said that they had come upon a double disclosure; for the first time they had seen the true *Ophelia*, they had learned a new respect for Julia Marlowe's intellectual resources.

The things that made it so real and strong they noted with a kind of awe. She seemed to feel a sense of her place in the court as a daughter of the lord chamberlain of the kingdom of Denmark, the man next to the king himself; she suggested dignity, worth, a self-respect, without loss of sweetness and innocence. When the king and her father oblige her to a complicity in their tricks upon *Hamlet* she yielded only from a sense of duty to her father and still struggling with herself.

*Hamlet.* . . . Where's your father?

*Ophelia.* At home, my lord.

The lie seemed wrung out of her by an invisible racking; she hated to say it and still that knowledge was heliographed to us and not to *Hamlet*. Of the moments when *Ophelia* realizes the loss of *Hamlet's* love, she made a tragic passage of an astonishing compulsion. For the first time one felt how much of exalted passion lay latent in this neglected character.

"O, help him, you sweet heavens!" seemed torn out of a stricken soul and from that time her disaster was foreshadowed upon us not as the weakness of a commonplace intellect overthrown, but as the inevitable and only possible ending of a great and shattered life.

The Mad Scene she played in a way without precedent on our stage. Instead of coming out decked with flowers, as is the custom, she had only a few petals in her unbound hair. Instead of giving her "rosemary" and "rue" to the persons on the stage, she knelt and offered only the leaves from her hair to some imaginary person, as if to suggest a vision of *Hamlet* or of her father. The manner of it was beyond all words pathetic; nothing else could have brought home to us so intimately the sense of *Ophelia's* infinite disaster and wrecked mind. In the course of a long experience I had seen many an *Ophelia* on many a stage. It was the first *Ophelia* in my observation to move an audience to tears. Yes, and something more, to the sense of a searching and unescapable sympathy and of a force there was no gainsaying, laid upon mind as much as heart. I

was reminded of what had happened when she played *Mary of the Highlands*.

Two other qualities in this impersonation, qualities that so far as I could remember were innovations, sounded unsuspected profundities in *Ophelia's* nature. Even in her first scene, even in her first words, the apparently unimportant "Do you doubt that?" and "No more but so?" she conveyed a certain impression of *Ophelia's* loneliness and troubles. As truly as she had suggested more than manifested the delicate melancholy of *Viola* and the shadow of doom on *Juliet* she made us understand here that *Ophelia's* mother was dead. I do not pretend an analysis of the means by which she made this communication, for there is, of course, no such word in the text, but she did it. The impression was unmistakable; it was as definitely certain as if she had declared the fact in words, and the strangest part of all was that it went home. Sometimes to the careless or to those of no Shakespearean bent. Astute newspaper writers made note of the fact the next day; it could have been no such fantastic self-creations as are supposed to seize spectators at a Hindoo Yogi's performances. When she said:

No more but so?

we were all conscious of a new import, conscious, too, of a vague wistfulness in the voice, and an undertone of tragic boding that clutched at the sympathies and held them afterward. There was

something in it more Greek than modern; we were reminded of the "Medea" and "Electra." In fact, it did not seem to be acting at all, but some outward expression of an inner conviction deeply seated. Since the days of Edwin Booth I had not encountered anything that seemed of like origin. One of the ablest of the critics called it "the very heart and soul and being of poetry—to convey such intimations in one's acting, or, if not precisely to convey them, to suggest them, to put the spectator in such a frame of mind that his fancy will create for a character a story and a condition not set down in the text."

"Romeo and Juliet" may be compared to a symphony; *Ophelia* was more like a painting, more like masterful, compact, intense Italian painting—Del Sarto, Giovanni Bellini. *Ophelia* seemed like the Saint Elizabeth of one or the Saint Katherine of the other—still looking out of the canvas when the canvas was gone.

When I read the comment of the Chicago critic about the heart of poetry I was reminded of remarks I had heard Miss Marlowe make in the summer of 1902, when she had grown ineffably weary of "Knighthood" and still was unable to compass her desires about the things she should play. Some one, I cannot now remember who, was uttering the usual lament that she was not appearing in Shakespeare, as if the poor woman were not appealing to heaven and earth to bring this about, and at the wind-up the commentator had something

to say about the worth of her *Juliet*, when she suddenly broke in with this, not as rejoinder but as addendum:

"What do you understand by great acting? Run over the elements of stage-craft. Let us say first that the words are uttered with all possible wisdom and skill. Then that the picturing is perfect, pose, gesture, manner, fitted to the meaning to be conveyed. Something else will be needed, will it not? Now all art is a matter of feeling, but of all the arts acting is closest to feeling because all the means of the actor's art are human, living, breathing things, while the other arts, except oratory, must use things that are inert and lifeless. All right, then. Plainly the 'something else' is the feeling of the actor for his part. I might understand *Juliet* perfectly but if I did not feel *Juliet* I should not play her to my satisfaction nor yours. Now carry this a little further. What is after all the most difficult thing in life? To keep always fine in one's inside dwelling place, whatever that may be called, isn't it? Nothing helps that so much as the exalted feelings that belong to a great work of beauty. So then, the ethics of acting are not inferior to the ethics of other arts, but if you stop to think of the peculiar human media of acting, aren't they better?"

"Oh, well," said some one in the little group of friends that was gathered around her, "we can't always be in this exalted state. If we could, there would be no exaltation."

"Why, of course!" said Miss Marlowe. "But



the point is that after these exaltations, the soul, or mind or whatever it is that sits inside of us and directs us, never drops back as far as it was before. That seems to me not only to justify acting but to prove it as a great moral force."

The three plays lasted some weeks in Chicago and then moved, by way of Pittsburgh, to New York, where the combination opened at the Knickerbocker Theater, October 10, in "Romeo and Juliet." No trace of modernity was to be discovered now in *Juliet*; the unanimous and eloquent praise of the critics and the manifest approval of the public must have soothed the spirit that had struggled so long against discordant conditions. Instead of finding that her excursions in contemporaneous plays had flawed her art the authorities gave verdict that she had "unaccountably emerged the greater as well as the more matured artist." "On the one hand," said the *Times*, "her *Juliet* was endowed with a broader variety of light and shadow, and on the other with more fluently modulated and deeper climaxes of tragic emotion." The public had expected much from the co-ordination of these careful, studious, conscientious artists; the judgment of the press was that all such expectations had been met and surpassed.

In all the ways that the art of the theater can justify itself, in splendor and accuracy of design, in the beauty that appeals to the eye and the beauty that captivates the ear, in ripe scholarship and the verity of feeling, these productions were called of

historic worth. A certain heartiness of approval, unequivocal and unforced, rang through all the comments. Mr. Sothern's inspired stage-craft, the perfect pictures that came from his hand and the new revelations of his acting range that he made as *Romeo*, drew the admiring attention of all the writers. *Romeo*, always a hard part to play, is more than ever difficult for an actor to whom the public has assigned a high but well-defined place as a master of modern comedy. There were critics, I think there were friends of Mr. Sothern, that did not expect *Romeo* to add to his fame. He overwhelmed them all with a portraiture of great poetic charm, distinction and efficacy. When to this he added his *Benedict*, so carefully considered and deftly done, it was viewed as a fit companion piece to his *Hamlet* and indicating an equal facility in Shakespearean comedy and Shakespearean tragedy.

The éclat of the engagement was beyond all precedent for native players. Miss Marlowe was sharply reminded of the time when she had tried an engagement at the old Fifth Avenue and must sell out half her contracted time to the Kendalls. Even the venerable William Winter, who had been her chief antagonist in the fight with Augustin Daly, capitulated now. "With one long sigh for summers passed away," he acknowledged that "Miss Marlowe's *Juliet* combines physical beauty, tender sensibility, imagination, deep feeling, capacity of passion and some measure of tragic force." He had been the last insurrecto; when he came into camp her

victory was complete, final and enduring. After that engagement, her *Juliet* was the one standard by which all others were estimated.

"Romeo and Juliet" was shown for three weeks in New York, where the death and burial of Shakespeare and all his works had been so often proclaimed. So far as any one could see it might have lasted out the year; the public showed no urge to be rid of it. But the season had been cut to a pattern according to ablest prognosis about the probable taste of audiences and "Much Ado" must go on next. After seven weeks in New York the company went to Boston to reap still more applause and good fortune. A tour of the larger cities and a visit to California ended this interesting and profitable season.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A CLASH WITH THE CRITICS



PHILOSOPHER has yet to arise able to deal justly and adequately with the toxic effects of what in the picturesque terminology of the newspaper offices is called tabasco. If to unprofessional ears the word seems strange it is best explained as the habit of giving to the public every day a dish more highly seasoned than yesterday's. There can be no doubt that one of the results is a jaded appetite that comes to crave extraordinary stimuli. The ways by which this is met in the daily press are familiar and need no emphasis; but what it does and has done in the theatrical world is not so well known. There was a time when Mr. Booth or Mr. McCullough or Mr. Barrett could go through the country year in and year out offering substantially the same repertoire. After many years and at long intervals Mr. Barrett brought out additions to his list, but in the main he traveled beaten ground. All this is changed now; the annual novelty is as essential as the annual appearance; and, in a time when available plays are rarer than charity, the difficulties of purposeful actors are incredible.

For the next season, 1905-1906, Miss Marlowe

and Mr. Sothern decided to add two Shakespearean comedies, "The Merchant of Venice" and "Taming of the Shrew." The venture was considerable; Miss Marlowe had never played *Portia* nor *Katherine*; Mr. Sothern had never played *Shylock* nor *Petruccio*; and the range of powers involved in these parts was nothing to be regarded lightly. But a genuine Shakespearean actor has always in contemplation much more Shakespeare than the work in hand; and both of these had long been acting in their minds the additional plays and many others. Miss Marlowe, for instance, had even gone so far as to prepare complete prompt-books for "A Winter's Tale" and "Measure for Measure" years before either could have been wanted on the stage.

To produce a play in these times had come to mean more than even the studious preparation of the text. A vast revolution in stage methods had taken place in thirty years. When Mr. Booth was at the height of his fame he traveled from place to place with no impedimenta but his own wardrobe and personal effects. Every theater had its own scenery (such as it was, heaven help all concerned!) and there had been a time not long before when every theater had also its own company of actors. In those days a Shakespearean production was a simple matter of salaries. In the year of grace, 1905, a Shakespearean production had ordinarily cost thirty to forty thousand dollars before it had been seen except by stage hands and manager. In the old days an actor could get along with any cos-

tuning that from the other side of the footlights did not look wrong enough to cause a titter. In 1905 it could not be only near right; it had to stand every critical and unfriendly testing.

A few items from the ledger may be interesting here. In this production of the "Taming of the Shrew," *Katherine* wore three dresses. The first two cost \$300 each and the third \$350; total, \$950 for one character in this one particular. And all this in the grand days before the war. Double all the prices if you wish to make an estimate of such expenditures to-day.

A pair of red satin shoes for this *Katherine* cost \$38 and a pair of stockings \$50. Her three pairs of shoes cost \$114. A gold embroidered cap cost \$50, a scarf as much, but her earrings only \$25. Her wardrobe complete cost \$1,448.60.

The dresses that *Ophelia* wore cost \$2,201.60 and she had other goodly items of expense.

Her chain of small squares of gold ornamented with brilliants cost \$1,000. Her gray *crepe de Chine* dress cost \$300. The prayer book she carried cost \$5 and her head dress \$50.

The first dress in which *Viola* appears cost \$200, her gold chain and ornament \$124, and her beaded purse \$5. Another of her costumes cost \$454.20.

When she was thus accoutered only one member of the cast had been provided for. *Orsino* must have costumes, and *Olivia* and *Malvolio*. *Sebastian* must go handsomely clad; there must be borne in mind always the imperative demands of the picture.





*Photograph by White*

*Katherine*  
(“The Taming of the Shrew”)



You can make no picture with satin on one courtier and cotton on another.

After which, the scenery. Sometimes a king's ransom was spent on one scene to get it right and then they found it was wrong and had to start again.

Then there was the rest of the trouble.

In the old days a Shakespearean actor was an actor and stopped there. In 1905, and after, he was actor, manager, producer, designer, artist, conceiver of great and wonderful stage pictures, expert about lights, expert about shadows in different lights, familiar with electricity and what could be done with it and what could not, expert as to historical epochs, infallible expert about color and color groupings, sure of himself and of his reasons at rehearsals and physically able to bear the strain that all these devilish conditions imposed upon him.

Out of a madhouse jumble of raving lunacies he produced order, a mechanism that revolved infallibly, great perfect tableaux at which the audience cheered with delight—and thus "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The Merchant of Venice," style of E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, season of 1905-1906.

In this work Miss Marlowe's share was the prompt-books. She spent her summer with one or another always before her.

The tour opened at Cleveland September 18, 1905, with "The Taming of the Shrew."

The First Act showed plainly enough an unusual conception and aim. These players held that the

piece was meant to be a farce. For this they had no end of warrant, though it had never been so played in our time. A farce it appears to be in the text; as a farce it was presented in its earlier history; as a farce probably Shakespeare himself saw it played. Shakespeareans of the closet should have known this and been prepared for it. Strong is the force of accepted fashion, even in ideas and even upon the studious. Many of the fairly expert were now taken off their guard and proceeded to view the results with misgivings. But even to the most fastidious, even to those that were shocked to have their prejudices traversed, one thing was undeniable. The play was magnificently done, infinitely funny, and made all souls that saw it happy with three hours of delicious entertainment. Two or three *Katherines* persisted in the minds of most playgoers; they seemed fairly tame and colorless compared with this. Vehement and pungent she was, certainly, but nobody could accuse her of being sour, a termagant or uninspired. Miss Marlowe had satisfied herself from the text that *Katherine* was not born cross-grained but had been made so because she saw that her sister *Bianca*, who had not a modicum of her mind or wit and was a nasty little cat, was surrounded with suitors while she had none. She knew that mentally she could run circles all around her sister and the cruelty of her fate that condemned her to the background was more than a proudly sensitive nature could bear.

It will be seen at once that this view outclasses

any other. For the modern stage it was all new; but not for the commentators. Rolfe had pointed it out long before; as a matter of fact it is about the only view of *Katherine* the book will sustain. In the way of acting it had one great advantage. It made *Katherine* consistent, possible, human, likeable, and manifesting mind; a clever, persisting, indomitable, coil-springed, feminine mind. Now other *Katherines* had been, for the most part, vixens at whose suppression by a thumping buffoon (still more savagely primitive) the public might feel satisfaction and so go home. This left the play without meaning except that scolding women ought to be ducked; a conclusion in which our ancestors were more interested and more adept than we. Well; but a *Katherine* so ordered would never suit this young woman. In the first place, she could not find it in the book, which was reason enough; in the next, it had neither psychology nor sympathy, depth nor human variety.

So she drew a *Katherine* that through all her excesses of temper and passion showed a substratum of character, and through all the whirlwinds of the farce intimated over and over a capacity for something else.

The more one observed this piece of work the more the meaning of it expanded.

The best she saved for the last.

Hortensio. Now, go thy ways; thou hast tamed a curst shrew.

*Lucentio.* 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so.

These are the final lines in the text as it stands. Superficially "so" looks like something to rhyme with "shrew" and round off a good ending to the Elizabethan taste. It occurred to her that more was meant, and summoning and co-relating other indices, she became satisfied that this was the fact. She made of her conclusion a goal to which she suggestively led up through all the scenes. To show what I mean, Act IV, Scene 3, ends with *Petruchio's* apparently complete triumph over her will.

*Petruchio.* . . .

Let's see; I think 'tis now some seven o'clock,  
And well we may come there by dinner time.

*Katherine.* I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost two;  
And 'twill be supper-time ere you come there.

*Petruchio.* It shall be seven ere I go to horse;  
Look, what I speak, or do, or think to do,  
You are still crossing it. Sirs, let't alone:  
I will not go to-day; and ere I do,  
It shall be what o'clock I say it is.

So they go out, *Petruchio* swelling with triumph. But behind his back *Katherine* holds up two fingers. It is still two o'clock and one can see that some day she will have it so.

The great speech of *Katherine* in the last act,

Fie, fie! Unknit that threatening unkind brow



she gave with chosen emphases by which she showed that in her heart she despised the gossamer things to whom she was speaking and again in her heart she was merely biding her time until she could reassert her dominion.

*Petruchio.* Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate.

So she kissed him. For all that one would not care to be in *Petruchio's* shoes. Even with the kiss there appeared, as if in the corner of her eye, certain small storm clouds that boded him no good. "The Taming of the Shrew," and then the taming of the tamer.

Miss Marlowe was to hear further about what were called her innovations in this play.

Mr. Sothern's *Petruchio* was equally far from the bullying person usually provided in the part. He was vigorous, witty, resolute, and masterful, and the attractive prize worth the effort that *Katherine* will put forth to subdue him.

"The Merchant of Venice," shown after three nights of "The Shrew," offered further surprises for seers and others. The first performance was not up to the usual mark. The weather had been warm, the rehearsals trying, and the machinery was not in good working order. The general opinion at the end was that the version used was too long and would have to be trimmed. General opinion was, as often, a bird of too swift flight. What seemed

to be a long text was only the troubles of a first night; afterward it went quickly, without cutting and within reasonable time limits. At that first showing the curtain did not come down upon the last scene until half an hour past midnight. The audience derived from it an unscheduled laugh, a thing that always promotes self-content and good humor. In one of her last lines *Portia* says:

It is almost morning.

Whereupon a voice in the gallery responded: "You bet it is!"

No other audience had occasion to be so minded. As a matter of fact, the verve of the piece proved one of its popular attractions. Mr. Sothern had achieved another triumph in stage direction as well as in picturing. Nothing beyond the richness of the scenes he had devised had ever been seen on the American stage.

It was declared then and came to be often repeated that he had shown of *Shylock* a great and absorbing study, different from any other that had been known in this generation. Instead of drawing the character with certain touches of sympathy, as Booth had treated it, or making it eccentric, as was Irving's way, he had adhered to the original thought and made *Shylock* terrible and tragic. Of course, whatever we may wish or pretend, this is what Shakespeare had in mind, and only this. In the days when it was regarded as an act of grace to rob a

Jew and scarcely a peccadillo to kill one, a play that deliberately suggested sympathy for these oppressed people would not last half an hour. The sympathy that Mr. Sothern provoked was the reflex of a better social conscience. He made us feel how dreadful had been the situation of the Jew in the western world and so from sheer revulsion against the hatred here pictured before us we came by a back route to a new understanding. There was nothing patriarchal about Mr. Sothern's picture. *Shylock* was hard; we had to remember what had made him hard. He was avaricious; we were reminded what had made him require money as a defense against wrong. He was mean; we knew that he had been treated meanly. He was all careless about his attire; his mind was busy with his wrongs and his sufferings. When he fastened on *Antonio* we knew why and did not wonder. When he tottered out of the court room, beaten, foiled and crushed, there should have been a chorus as in a Greek play to repeat what every person in the audience felt. "These are the fruits of wrong. For who planted in this man's heart the seeds of revenge?"

Mr. Sothern won the great honors in this play and Miss Marlowe rejoiced sincerely that this was so. Her *Portia* was charming to look at and melodious to hear, but for herself she would never have chosen to appear in it. She could find in it little that appealed to her and less to move her. A rich young woman won by a worthless lover and going

disguised into a court to save her lover's friend from a peril that was after all fictitious—all the motives seemed insufficient. Nobody has ever been moving as *Portia*; nobody ever will be. To fit beautifully into the picture, to be winsome and gracious and to lug in the necessary levers to overthrow the monster of the piece, and so make an end—this was the book. She would not strain the book to make a stellar part not intended to be there. Everybody felt that this *Portia* was charming and adequate; that was enough. If critics were left unprepared by tradition for a *Portia* that was not evermore declaiming as a high lady, but could laugh and jest and be human they must take her so here.

She made a strong and telling contrast in the Casket Scene between her attitude toward the *Prince of Morocco* and her cleverly conveyed anxiety when *Bassanio* comes to the choosing, and the Trial Scene she handled entirely after her own researches. She could not conceive that a delicately reared woman, thrust suddenly into a court room filled with disputing men, could plausibly be made strident, oracular, or domineering. She therefore elected to play the young law student exactly as a law student, sent to deliver another man's opinion. There was one feature of this that deserved more attention than it ever received. She had reasoned to herself that as *Portia* knows all the time that *Antonio* is in no danger, to make her appear as seriously alarmed about him was inartistic and untrue. Playing therefore this unhandy rôle with full dignity and port,

she still managed to convey her knowledge of *Antonio's* safety, which was not good tradition but struck her as good sense. As the audience is never deceived by *Portia's* disguise, however much the story requires the characters to be fooled by it, this touch seemed to establish her in a closer intellectual sympathy with her hearers. One thing she did in this scene earned the everlasting gratitude of every student; she read the oft-mangled Mercy Speech without an error. But she never cared much for the part, nor for the play as compared with some others of her master's, and her *Portia* will not be reckoned among her greatest successes.

Some weeks of engagements in smaller cities perfected the company in the new plays and, on October 16, it began its New York season at the Knickerbocker. "The Taming of the Shrew" was chosen for the opening piece and seemed at first the stormy petrel; down came a sirocco of conflicting opinion. It is likely that the futility of criticism never had a better or more convincing exposition. After one has read all the lucid comment printed about that first performance, one may well hold one's poor head and wonder. Since learned critics write such absolutely contrary and irreconcilable opinions about the same work, upon what basis or principle, if any, does the whole thing proceed? The same performance cannot possibly be at one and the same time "rather tame" and "bordering upon rough house farce"; "a palpable burlesque" and "as a whole admirable"; nor can a player be at one and

the same time "simply irresistible" and "only a frolicker."

The comments on *Katherine* and *Petruchio* were so diverse and some of them so uninformed that Miss Marlowe was tempted to a course she had never before followed, and is not likely to pursue again. She wrote for the *Evening Telegram* some observations of her own upon plays and critics, which seem so remarkable that they should be produced. She said:

It may well be questioned, whether one who attempts the new, the unexpected, in any department of art should not abide by whatever comments the result evokes, looking to another rather than to the present day for a just appreciation. It is well known that so eminent a critic as William Hazlitt was betrayed into the serious blunder of grossly denouncing the intensely tragic *Shylock* of Edmund Kean simply because from youth he had seen the rôle interpreted only as a comic, grotesque figure, a subject for laughter.

Mr. Sothorn and myself are in the midst of an experience parallel to that of Kean. As far back as one may go, "The Taming of the Shrew"—ever decorously enshrined as a classic beneath the aureole of the name Shakespeare—has been performed as if it were of a classically comic fiber comparable in dignity and grace to "As You Like It" or to "Twelfth Night." Its true spirit has been lost because of the incongruous austerity in which such performances have clothed it, and utterly away from these renditions of years past has been the central idea of its author, who, as a keen theatrical manager, wrote this play for an Elizabethan audience which, he knew only too well, possessed to the full the wild, curious, hilarious sense of Elizabethan farce comedy.



It is difficult to reconcile the subdued, dignified, restrained interpretation of the play either with the text itself or with the opinion of any reputable commentators.

In all these, such as Fleay, Ward, Furnival and our own American Furness, the invariable saying is that "This is the only broad farce comedy with which Shakespeare's name is connected." Why should these admitted authorities in Shakespeare make such a distinction between the spirit of his "joyous" comedies and this palpable farce unless the context of the latter demands that it be given in a different spirit than the former? However, we rest our justification of our ideas on nothing less substantial than the authoritative folio edition of 1623. We rely on no other authority but Shakespeare's own text. By this we do not mean the Booth edition, which was so cut and altered that it could be played as an afterpiece to the "Merchant of Venice"; nor that of the late Augustin Daly, which not only retained the spurious induction despite the fact that it is utterly unrelated to the play proper, but otherwise interpolated and transposed the text; nor the Winter version which is heavily interlarded with long passages foreign to Shakespeare's original text. But we mean the text itself, as it most probably left the poet's hands, and as it was printed with his stage directions in 1623.

All we ask of those that disagree with our interpretation of the play is to read this text and particularly the stage directions—helps that are very seldom found in any of the poet's plays. It is our temporary misfortune to be offering our public the real text of Shakespeare devoid of the conventionalities and traditions with which it has been encumbered for years; and, to our surprise, many persons have failed to recognize it. We have abandoned a commonly admitted to be spurious and certainly wholly unrelated

Induction; we have given the text absolutely without interpolating a line; and we have acted it plainly in accordance with the author's stage directions, and with its indubitably farcical nature—but so ingrained is the impression left by former misconceptions, perversions and un-Shakespearean "Shrews," that we do not look for its universal acceptance and appreciation.

It needs but an appeal to the text to demonstrate that *Katherine* was tamed not so much by physical overbearance as by the arousing of her sense of humor and of the ridiculous. As Furnival says, *Petruchio* is a kind of *Faulconbridge* in "farcically making himself out worse than he really is." He is a practical joker and so wild and furious are his exploits off the stage that for climacteric effect it is difficult to parallel them on the stage. "There, take it to you, trenchers, cups and all," wrote the poet, and immediately followed it with the stage direction, "Throws the meat, etc., about the stage." In Act II, Scene 1, *Hortensio* is described as "Enter *Hortensio* with a broken head." In the same act *Katherine* is first described as striking *Bianca* and in the same scene the stage direction reads, "Flies after *Bianca*." In this act, too, the indicated "business" for *Katherine* in the scene with *Petruchio* is that "She strikes him." And so on throughout the play—wherever the poet is at pains to indicate stage directions—it is but to emphasize so turbulent, impetuous a spirit that it is difficult to keep pace with the very extravagance he himself intended the farce should possess.

It is an elementary fact that none of the poet's plays—indeed, almost none of his great rôles—is capable of but a single interpretation. Their glory and delight at each new appearance upon the stage are the care, the deliberation, the new insight, the novelty with which one actor views a part, in distinction, perhaps in spite of the appeal it might have

made to another. We can enjoy the frieze of Giotto of the Last Supper no less than that of Leonardo da Vinci despite the fact that one is quite different in conception from the other. But it is the province of the well-disciplined mind, and particularly of him that speaks with the voice of authority, to recognize the respective virtues of each.

All the authoritative Shakespearean critics have been of one mind about this play.

I profess to have taken Shakespeare for my guide in all these things. I follow him here. Shall I desist and create a *Katherine* that is not his because some one else had adopted another standard? I must play according to my own convictions, not by another's.

Any one that has read attentively Taine's immortal description of the Elizabethan stage as it really was would need no intimate acquaintance with Shakespearean texts to perceive that Miss Marlowe must have a substantial basis of truth for her argument. Mr. Sothern was interviewed on the same subject, and, although he spoke with evident restraint, made some searching comments. "When you play Shakespeare," he observed, "why not play Shakespeare? What's the use of reading into his plays, be they farce or tragedy, a lot of fictitious values for which not the slightest warrant can be found? 'The Taming of the Shrew' is a farce—the wildest kind of farce. It is easy to demonstrate conclusively that no interpretation could be too extreme and no business too boisterous to be in harmony with Shakespeare's own conception of the spirit of the piece." And he called attention to these lines

of *Gremio's* in the play, which seem to have been overlooked by all the critics :

I'll tell you, *Sir Lucentio*: when the priest  
Should ask if *Katherine* should be his wife,  
"Ay, by gogs-wouns," quoth he, and swore so loud,  
That all amazed, the priest let fall the book;  
And, as he stoop'd again to take it up,  
The mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff,  
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.

Also these :

. . . "A health," quoth he; as if  
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates  
After a storm: quaffed off the muscadel,  
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face.

He observed that progress in this world had been made by persons with the courage to cast aside hide-bound tradition. "For forty years," he said, "the English stage knew no other *Shylock* than the buffoon, the comic figure drawn by Doggett in the Lansdowne version, until Macklin and Kean lifted this conception from the depths of low comedy to the high place of tragic intensity it has since held in the public mind. Yet not until this performance turned Drury Lane from a failure into a success and filled its pit with audiences that literally rose in cheers was this interpretation forced upon the critics."

"The Shrew" ran two weeks to crowded houses.

It seemed that the critics that did not like it were but fallible representatives of public opinion; nothing the two stars had done up to that time in New York had met with a heartier reception. The first performance of "The Merchant" came on Monday night, October 30. One of the journals the next day found some fault with Mr. Sothern's *Shylock* on the ground that it lacked humor, being plainly under the impression that the part was comic. Other writers failed to discern his point of view and so judged on the good old safe basis of tradition; a raft that has borne to safety many a writer to whom texts are still strangers. But the general tone of the comment was eminently laudatory. The *World* said it was an interpretation "greatly impressive," and pointed out with eloquence the triumph involved in portraying *Shylock* as he is in the book and at the same time creating in the spectator's mind a deep-seated and sympathetic revolt against the cruel injustice to which he and his people were subjected, a truly notable triumph of the subtlest art. Mr. Sothern had stripped from the part all the modern day broideries that never belonged to it and made the picture what Kean and Kemble made of it and what Shakespeare unquestionably intended.

A pleasing illustration of all that Mr. Sothern had said about the power of tradition upon the critics was afforded by one that sternly rebuked the actors in the name of Shakespeare for leaving out a scene that was never in the play. It had been put in by some innovator, and the critics, never having hap-

pened to read the piece, assumed that the scene was veritable. It seemed to be the open season for wild guesses. In a Sunday newspaper one learned gentleman maintained that the Court-Room Scene must be treated as solemn tragedy by everybody else because it had been so viewed by one famous actor, and with a kind of stately scorn he rejected the notion that *Portia* is in any degree absolved from fidelity to this ill-considered practise by remembering that she knows how little *Antonio* has to fear.

On November 13, "Twelfth Night" succeeded "The Merchant," and New York had its first chance to see Mr. Sothern as *Malvolio*, which it found different from any it had seen within a generation. Mr. Sothern's conception was founded upon the textual fact that *Malvolio*, although of absurd vanity and officious as a turkey cock, was still a man of character and some worth. The base of this impersonation may be found in *Malvolio's* own lines beginning with "I think nobly of the soul," and in *Olivia's* manifest respect for him. This projects a highly human instead of a grotesque being, to which the stage is most accustomed. It puts within the actor's grasp such showings of the man's true nature as otherwise must be disregarded, and with this come in the possibilities of a sympathetic interest of a singular but genuine order. We do not usually think of *Malvolio*, the butt of the roisterers and the austere reprover of mirth, as any object of sympathy. Yet when Mr. Sothern acted him, despite the amusement at *Maria's* tricks and *Sir Toby's*



horse play, we turned against them all when we saw the man in prison, and by the time he had torn up the forged letter and strode from the room we were ready to agree all with him that he had had wrong, notorious wrong. There was something of great dignity in the manner of that exit, redeeming all of *Malvolio's* follies and overcoming us with a sudden wave of respect and regret. We were a little ashamed that we had laughed at him.

This triumph of art was certain and universally acknowledged. It was, by way of incident, the means of effecting an odd reconciliation. William Winter, the dean of the critical chapel, had an ancient quarrel with Mr. Sothern, who for years had expected nothing but condemnation in the columns of the *Tribune*, and was, I may say, seldom disappointed therein. But when the sage beheld this *Malvolio* he forgot all grudges and laid his laurel wreath with the rest. He said it was "a thoroughly admirable achievement, only needing a little more of age, of solidity and of deliberation."

The *Viola* that shone beside so notable a *Malvolio* was the same that some eighteen years before had astonished and charmed a skeptical audience at the old Star; the same and not the same. More than one commentator noted that in some strange way it seemed younger, not older; fresher, not more sophisticated; subtler, more masterful, better considered, and when she ended that passage beginning, "Make me a willow cabin at your gate," there went again over the house that queer, involuntary

suspuration of men and women seized and subjugated with a new sense of beauty.

While she was playing in New York in this engagement, she received one day through the mails an envelope containing this poem:

To Ganymede—His Voice

The mighty forest wakens from its sleep,  
Stretching its myriad arms toward the sun.  
The rivulets—their matin song begun—  
Hide gnomes and elves with blinking eyes apeek  
Who fly the throstle's note. To his old knees  
Poor Corin falls and croons his daily prayer,  
When—hark! Upon the fire-spangled air  
Re-echoed from a thousand dew-draped trees  
Sweeter than laughing water or sweet bird  
Or Corin's hymn, or Sylvius's soft reed,  
The joyous tender voice of Ganymede  
Breathes music through the gentle poet's word.  
Youth, Love and Folly, and the world-worn sage,  
Whose shadow lends the light a warmer glow,  
How mid the rustling boughs they come and go  
From cruel court to leafy hermitage!  
The lusty horn, the song, the flashing spears,  
The pomp, the crowds that sorrow or rejoice,  
The lilt of laughter and the hush of tears  
Have vanished all—but Ganymede! His voice!

Poetic tributes were no novelty in her experience; she could have filled a large printed volume (or papered walls) with those she had received. But her attention was drawn to this by its unusual quality of excellence, sincerity and music. Besides, it was

written by some one that had seen her play *Rosalind*; but *Rosalind* she had not done in New York for six years. There was no signature and no hint of the author, and yet the sound and lilt of it seemed to suggest something she had heard or known. She put it by with a thought that perhaps she would some day learn who of her friends had so skilful a touch in verse, but it was not until years afterward that she discovered the author. He was Mr. Sothorn.

Boston received "The Shrew" kindly, but the critics displayed much of the curious uncertainty about the interpretation that had been shown at first in New York. The one thing that was clear to them was that this was entirely different from the orientation of the piece accepted by more modern tradition. Whether that fact was good or bad seemed to depend upon the round the writer's mind was accustomed to travel. The idea that Shakespeare had written or could write a farce seemed to some to call for the police patrol. Or, if he had written one, clearly it ought not to be played as one, but lifted by sheer effort to the realms of dreamy poesy. Yet all admitted that, if one got over the reef of this difficulty and forgot the awful irreverence to tradition and all that, this was a most effective way to do a farce. But, ought we to forget and ought we to allow ourselves to be thus piloted, in our own despite, across tradition's holy shoals? Ought we not to stand firm for Daly and Irving and frown upon these innovators that amuse us so mightily? These serious questions beset more

than one honored penman the next morning. They did not bother the public, as quickly appeared. As in New York, the production went amazingly well and proved to be one of the most popular Shakespearean performances of modern times. If the critics were, as one observer suggested, "Young-Men-Afraid-of-their-Shakespeare," the people were not of that order. What, after all, does dramatic criticism really effect? This piece played exactly upon the lines of this first conception, continued in the Sothern-Marlowe repertoire for twenty years, was repeated and repeated in New York and every other important city in this country, drew to each performance a capacity house, and so far as Shakespeare is concerned, established new bounds of popular favor.

Boston applauded the new *Malvolio* and the new *Shylock*; then at the end of a highly prosperous season it again applauded this *Romeo* and this *Juliet*. After a tour of New England cities the company began a three weeks' engagement at the Broad Street Theater in Philadelphia in "The Shrew." By this time, the calm insistence of Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern that they had in this play but followed the sure intention of their master and the teachings of the Elizabethan stage had begun to stir among students the spirit of inquiry, whereupon controversy ceased. The *Public Ledger* said that the performance was delightful, "having throughout the true Shakespearean atmosphere and spirit. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe have been criticized else-

where as being too boisterous in the rôles of *Petruccio* and *Katherine*. The answer to the criticism has been that they are acting upon a more faithful conception of the author's intent than those that had preceded them." Unconditional and immediate surrender, as you see. The *Evening Telegraph* said:

Undoubtedly, Shakespeare wrote "The Taming of the Shrew" as a farce and undoubtedly it was acted in that vein in his time. In the course of years, it was elevated into a comedy, and so we have always known it. With the careful and conscientious regard for accuracy that Mr. Sothern always shows, the play is now given after the original manner, and the noisy humor of farce riots rampantly through the five acts.

While playing in Philadelphia, Miss Marlowe met with an accident that came near to end her season, although the public was never aware of what had happened. In one of the plays, she sprained her ankle so badly that it was necessary to place the foot in a plaster cast and she was hardly able to endure for a moment the agony of standing. The doctor men commanded her to give up her work. She defied the doctor men. Mr. Sothern devised a kind of sedan chair in which she was carried upon the stage; he rearranged the plays so that the curtain always rose upon her seated, in which posture she managed to say most of her lines, now and then standing but never walking. To one that has seen her *Katherine* as she usually played it, the notion of a seated and inactive *Shrew* would be preposterous.

Yet, so cleverly was the piece amended that most of the audience never suspected that this was not the regular method. Those that noticed a difference were pleased with it and Mr. Sothern was often complimented for his new and effective business. The effects of vixenish ill-temper that Miss Marlowe used to achieve by stamping up and down the stage she now must win chiefly by her voice and it is evident from the criticisms that she did this perfectly. When the curtain fell at the end of each act, she must be taken from her seat and placed in an invalid's rolling chair with which she was transported to her dressing-room.

The rest of the repertoire followed "The Shrew" in Philadelphia to almost unprecedented receipts, and the company went by way of Washington, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati to the West, where the season ended.

Before this event, announcement had been made that, thereafter, Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern would not again appear under the Syndicate's management. At once the newspapers surmised a story. It was never revealed to them. The relations of the co-stars with Charles Frohman had been in all ways pleasant and satisfactory, but Mr. Frohman was not alone in the Syndicate and one of his associates was differently temperament. At the outset of the co-partnership the condition had been established that costumes and all scenic effects were to be in Mr. Sothern's control. He began to negotiate with a firm of his long acquaintance for costume supplies.



One day a member of the Syndicate, and not unknown in the trump of fame, approached him and said, off hand:

"The costumes will be by Blank & Blank."

Mr. Sothern was aware of the danger that lay in any breaking over of the contract preserves, and besides, he noticed that the Syndicate man talked sideways and watched him with slant eyes, which he had learned to recognize as a bad sign. But he was too placable to stickle about points. So he merely called attention to the terms of the contract and observed that in accordance therewith he had begun an arrangement with Dash & Dash.

"The costumes will be by Blank & Blank," said Syndicate, bristling.

"Not if the contract means anything," said Mr. Sothern. "But let us have no difficulty about it. We will let the costume order by competitive bidding among all the firms."

With ill grace the other consented. Bids were invited, and when they were opened, another firm was found to have bidden much under Blank & Blank, and obtained the work. The uninitiated will think the next phase of this business like a child that "gets mad" while playing "I Spy," but of course there was more than personal pique involved. From this time on the disappointed Syndicate man was the persistent enemy of the Sothern-Marlowe combination and pursued it with such ingenuity of annoyance that a part of Mr. Sothern's time must be taken in flipping away the gad flies loosed from this

quarter—which may be taken as another glimpse at life as it really is. The end came in Philadelphia with the accident to Miss Marlowe. Although the press and the public were equally unaware of this passing mishap and it had cost not a cent in business, the news of it was conveyed to the enemy by some one in the company, probably one stationed there for such employments. From this end of the Syndicate now came a demand that Miss Marlowe should retire from the cast and her salary be discontinued. The stars felt that this was going too far. Therefore, they ended the contract with the Syndicate and entered upon a new and better arrangement with Messers S. S. and Lee Shubert, the only theatrical direction that had succeeded in making headway against the Fearsome Trust, octopus of theatrical art.

By the new terms, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe were to appear only under the Shubert management and, so far as possible, in the Shubert theaters. From the Syndicate they had received \$115,000 a year each. Instead of salaries they were now to have a percentage share in the net receipts that promised them a much greater return for their efforts than they had ever reaped before.

Rewards long deferred had come at last.

Toward the end of this season occurred the great earthquake and fire in San Francisco. Like all theatrical and most other persons, Miss Marlowe cherished a strong affection for San Francisco and her sympathies were stirred by so signal a disaster to a

place where she had always felt at home. With Mr. Sothern, she played at Chicago at a benefit performance for the fire sufferers, appearing in a huge tent raised for the occasion on the lake front. It seated 30,000 persons and was filled.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MIND, ART AND LIVING



It is much the fashion among present day actors, even good and thoughtful actors, to decry conversation about their art. "Let us not talk shop," says one if a matter of stage-craft comes up, and shifts to something inspirational—like talcum powder. It is an affectation that never appealed to Julia Marlowe. In all probability, she never thought of it. If to discuss the stage and its craft possibilities and limitations is to talk shop, then shop was the topic of which she never wearied. One of her intimate personal friends was Miss Elizabeth McCracken, of Boston, well-known writer and astute critic. Some years ago Miss McCracken made public a few examples of the manner of shop talk she carried on with Miss Marlowe.

On one occasion, she asked her why, since she did not greatly care for the part of *Portia*, she went to the trouble to costume *Portia* more regally than any other part she played. Miss Marlowe said:

"*Portia* was very rich—richer than any one else I ever played. She had such things and quantities of them."

She showed Miss McCracken a rose-colored and

green brocaded cloak she had added to her costuming of *Juliet*. "I wear it," she said, "when I go to the *Friar's* cell to get the potion."

Miss McCracken said she liked better the plain, dark, almost black cloak Miss Marlowe used to wear.

"So do I," said Miss Marlowe, "but *Juliet* would not. I should wear that; but she would wear this. That combination of colors is in many of the Italian portrait paintings of that period. In soul, *Juliet* was universal; but outwardly she was not different from other Italian girls of the Renaissance."

Professor Rolfe, the great Shakespearean, the editor of the Shakespeare most used in American schools, was one of her warmest friends, drawn to her, as so many other students have been, by the sure freemasonry of the study. On one occasion when he was present, *Portia* came up for discussion. Somebody remarked on the criticism I have mentioned that her *Portia* lacked stateliness, and Miss Marlowe said that she was sorry anybody found fault with her interpretation, but that she could not act any other person's *Portia*; she must act her own.

Dr. Rolfe: My dear young lady, you are correct, perfectly correct. And to my mind, so is your *Portia*.

Miss Marlowe: I am glad you like her. She is the only one I have—the only one I can find in the play for me, at least. I cannot see that the Trial Scene, whatever it may be for *Shylock* or *Antonio*, is the climax of the play for *Portia*. I think that is found in the Casket Scene where *Bassanio* makes his choice. *Portia* loved *Bassanio*; she

wanted him to choose rightly; she was almost tempted to be foresworn to teach him how. And he did choose rightly. It seems to me that what she says then, that speech beginning,

“How all the other passions fleet to air,”

is the deepest thing, the truest thing, in short, the most important thing she has to say.

Somebody suggested that there was the Mercy Speech.

Miss Marlowe: Yes, there is. But *Portia* thought that. The other speech she felt. And I am sure her emotions were stronger than her intellect, or she would have seen, which she did not, that *Bassanio* was not a very fine-grained person—a fortune-hunter who lets his best friend risk his life that he may be a fortune-hunter!

Dr. Rolfe: Though he does say

“In Belmont is a lady richly left”

he also says,

“And she is fair.”

He remembered that.

Miss Marlowe: But he didn't remember it first.

Some one asked her about her business of being amused at the expense of the *Prince of Morocco*, who, after all, seemed in the play to love her.

Miss Marlowe: It wasn't his love that amused her. It was his apology for his complexion. No one with a sense of humor could take him seriously after that.



Miss McCracken objected that, while she believed *Portia* to have an intellect or she could not have such a keen sense of humor, she did not make her very intellectual in the Trial Scene.

Miss Marlowe: I think I do. I make her simple in her manner and quiet in her dress; and, since she was only a girl after all, and unused to courts of law, I make her a little shy, and, because her being there, with all its serious intent and purpose, was rather comic, I make her a bit merry.

On another occasion, Miss McCracken noticed a cloak that Miss Marlowe had prepared to wear as *Ophelia* and said she had never seen an *Ophelia* that wore a cloak. "When does she need it?" she asked.

"In the Mad Scene. She had been gathering flowers outside the castle. It was cold."

"Yes, but poor *Ophelia* was 'importunate, indeed, distract.' Would she have thought of putting on a cloak?"

"Perhaps not, but her attendants would have thought of it for her. She lived in the castle; she was the daughter of the lord chamberlain; she unquestionably had waiting gentlewomen."

Of *Ophelia's* character, which Miss Marlowe often discussed with Miss McCracken, she said once:

"She was no ordinary girl. Her father was lord chamberlain. His daughter, as he himself, and her brother also, told her, was beneath the prince

in birth. Yet, not only did *Hamlet* desire her for his wife, but the *King* wished it, too, and the *Queen*. Neither *Polonius* nor *Laertes* believed this; but it was true."

She found in *Ophelia's* effort to shield her father another evidence of her character. "It shows *Ophelia's* poise," she said to Miss McCracken. "*Polonius* was annoying to *Hamlet*, under any circumstances. *Ophelia* could not have lived all her life at the court of Denmark without having discovered that. How unendurably it would have nettled *Hamlet* to hear that *Polonius* had been listening behind the arras to his so personal, so private words to *Ophelia*! She knew that; and she tries both to protect her father and to spare *Hamlet*. She failed; that was her tragedy, that she always failed. She tried to save the persons she loved, and she could not."

When she took up a new part, she read everything she could find that might throw light upon it and searched the galleries for portraits of its time. She was continually astonishing even her intimates with points she had dug from out-of-the-way places and they had not suspected. Some one asked her what led her to choose the peculiar deep brownish red of the cloak she wore as *Romola*. She said that while at Florence she had noticed that shade in a painting by Filipino Lippi and then had come upon it repeated in other pictures of the time in which women of distinction were shown.

From the beginning of her career, her dream was of an endowed theater at which Shakespeare could be given with both care and confidence because the production would be independent of the box-office receipts. She never lost an opportunity to talk this. Once, in San Francisco, she broke into an interview with:

"Oh, that the men that endow libraries would do as much by one theater!"

"You favor a national theater?"

"Indeed, I do."

"But would you play in one?"

"Give me the chance!"

"There would have to be more than one principal actress."

"I should hope so."

"Say yourself for Shakespeare, and Mrs. Fiske for the modern?"

"All right."

"And, then, there would be long lists of others and a great yearning for parts that had been given elsewhere. Don't you think there would be a lot of friction?"

"Yes, but have it. I remember an old actor that used to argue against a national theater on the supposition that, under a Republican administration, all the actors would be Republicans and, under a Democratic administration, all Democrats. I said I'd like to see a national theater just the same, even if they had to be all Populists."

Her friend, Mrs. Eugenia Woodward, who was

then and had been for many years in her company, was present at this talk. She suggested that, in a national theater, there would be no more chance of Republican or Democratic domination than there was of Republican or Democratic mail cars or postage stamps. "We get our letters just the same, no matter which party is in power," she said. Miss Marlowe assented.

"There are too many bogies put in the way of all progress," said she. "If we stopped to get frightened of them all, we should never budge an inch in any direction."

Once she was asked her opinion about the campaign to drive from the stage the plays that were then called suggestive and have now a shorter and uglier term. In reply, she took her pen and wrote this:

In regard to the present agitation seemingly for the purification of the stage, I feel that my attitude can best be judged by the class of plays in which I myself have appeared during my long service to the theater. I believe in beauty and truth in the drama. These forms must prevail in the end, for only these survive. I believe, too, in a sufficient latitude for the presentation of those problems of life which are of value and importance to all, and against the honest presentation of which the doors of the theater should not be closed. But, I would see such problems treated by masters with a serious purpose rather than exploited in a sensational manner for mere commercial profit. I believe that there are moderate, honorable and lasting rewards to be won in the theater; it has been my desire to win these. I believe there

are great and permanent benefits that the theater can confer; it is my desire and my ambition to associate my name alone with these aspects. I deplore the noisy, the blatant and the hysterical. I would rather have a cymbal sounded before the theater than a penny rattle!

My great regret is that there cannot be one class of theaters which shall, at all times, be reserved for the presentation of the best and highest in the drama and to which the public can resort with confidence, and where their confidence should never be abused. It is almost impossible to establish a suitable atmosphere for the classic drama in a theater which the previous week had housed some cheap, unworthy, and sensational phase of a condition that in the end can be only ephemeral, a theater in which Shakespeare may possibly be followed by the latest dramatic impropriety. I feel that it is proved by the attitude of the public that, for the most part, audiences have a large share in the responsibility for the present unfortunate tendency, and the remedy is to be sought, and the cure applied, quite as much beyond the doors of the theater as behind them.

The next time this subject came up, she said:

"I think my adherence to the rôle of the woman that does not fall when tempted has best shown the public my position about such matters. The dramatic attraction of the woman that stays pure is a subject in which I have always been interested. The more we do to raise the standard of morality and to stimulate pure, wholesome reasoning in the minds of the public, the more we do to deserve its gratitude. Not that I believe the so-called 'problem' play with an immoral woman as its central figure is

pernicious in itself. On the contrary, as a literary work, it occupies a prominent position among things artistic. But, as for its being true art—why, most emphatically, no! And I fear it oftener proves a dagger to morality than a spur, for, while it is a great and forbidding example to the few, to the many it is only an unwholesome entertainment.”

“Why is it then,” some one asked, “that the greatest of modern plays is the problem play of the immoral sort?”

“That is not quite true,” she answered quickly. “Ibsen is, I believe, the acknowledged master of this school of problem plays, and there is not a tinge of immorality in his great work, ‘The Doll’s House.’ *Nora* is as spotless as *Cordelia*. It takes a greater artist to make a good woman interesting than to make a base woman sympathetic and thrilling.

“This is true of both the author and the actress. A woman of moral depravity offers the modern playwright greater scope than a good woman because her life is full of incidents that are dramatic. Extreme passions, love, suffering, and final retribution—all these things supply opportunities for climax and characterization. But where will you find a figure in the problem play fit to compare with those of the classics? What could be more interesting than the love, life and death of the pure *Juliet*? Does *Rosalind* fail to interest because she is virtuous, and is not the philosophy that invariably runs through a Shakespearean play of greater value,



more wholesome and more instructive than any lesson taught in the problem play?

"If we were to eliminate from the theater the work of artists that prefer to expound those characters that stand for truth and beauty and all things large and good and honorable, it seems to me the world would soon be content to close the doors of the theater forever.

"Artists as a class are supported at the public expense and for the public good. And it seems to me that we of the stage can best serve this end and best deserve the generous rewards we sometimes win by a faithful adherence to the presentation of what is best and noblest in life."

Some months after she had returned to the Shakespearean drama, she said:

"I have never worn a gown on the stage more modern than 1863. That was in 'Barbara Frietchie.' Oh, yes—I forgot. Last year, I played for six weeks in a modern play, 'Fools of Nature.' But people somehow did not care for me in that kind of thing and I did not care for myself. I have always done the picturesque and primitive things, dealing with the larger, or, at least, the more freely manifested emotions."

Once she was asked how old an actress must be before she could play *Juliet* with adequate and reasoned authority.

"Given ability and experience," she said, "I should think an actress ought to be a good *Juliet* at the age of twenty-five years."

"But, think of the experience with the world the actress must have!" exclaimed her questioner.

"One can play *Lady Macbeth* without having committed a murder," was her dry comment.

"The *Taming of the Shrew*" being under discussion, she said:

"Dr. Rolfe said to me once, 'Always remember, my dear Julia, that *Bianca* is the shrew.' And she is. *Bianca* is a mealy-mouthed shrew, always slyly exciting the quick-tempered *Katherine*. Don't you remember in the First Act? Her father asks *Katherine* why she treats her weak sister so badly. 'Her silence flouts me,' *Katherine* shrieks. Then, you remember in the Last Act where *Bianca* says: 'More fool you to wager upon my virtue.' Oh, we all know the *Bianca* kind!"

"Cats!" observed Mrs. Woodward.

A reporter of the *Philadelphia North American* wrote in January, 1909, that "to interview Julia Marlowe is to hear precisely what you expected—very little about Julia Marlowe as an individual and a great deal about her as an artist." She said to this writer:

"Say what you will, the basis of all art is beauty. I cannot have any great enthusiasm for anything that is not fundamentally beautiful. There are many effective plays, therefore, with long and prosperous runs that I take no personal interest in because they do not touch the spring of beauty, they are not the highest form of art.

"We have great poetic plays of modern life that



*Photograph by Ye Rose Studio*

JULIA MARLOWE IN 1906



belong to the highest artistic rank. 'Magda,' for instance.

"A good homely illustration of what I mean was afforded by a woman in the gallery of a Boston theater recently. When the curtain had fallen on the climax of a play, she turned to her companion and said, 'Ain't it awfully sad, though? But it ain't ugly.'

"That is the point. We ought not to want ugly things on the stage handled in an ugly manner.

"To me the plays of Ibsen and his school offer little attraction. Yet, those Ibsen parts are absolutely actor-proof. The actor cannot fail with them, so wonderfully are they constructed.

"The modern unpoetic plays tie the actor down. What I want is sweep—a great wonderful outlet for the imagination and the soul. And where can one get it except as in Shakespeare and the poetic drama?"

She never learned even the simplest and least objectionable phases of the press agent's art, and no reporter, however skilful, succeeded in getting from her a really good interview or what the newspaper offices call a story. "Of all the American actresses of prominence," wrote at this time a woman member of the staff of the *Chicago Record Herald*, "the adorable Marlowe is the most impossible to interview. To passing acquaintances she is the spirit of friendliness, vitally alive with kindness and sparkling spirits, but let a newspaper slave approach her and she is as silent as the sphinx—charming in

her silence, most polite, most beautiful, most bewitching, but surely silent, nevertheless. It is not the silence of high and mighty egotism or anything of that sort. It is the natural retirement of the sensitive woman."

Once an editor to whom she had courteously declined to furnish copy concerning bobbed hair or something of that kind, unmasked the batteries of allurements.

"Miss Marlowe," he said, "you don't seem to understand. We syndicate our matter. What you say will be printed to-morrow in 117 newspapers."

"That," said she, "is 117 reasons for not saying it."

Cleverer men sometimes took her off her guard by talking about Shakespeare or something to do with art in general.

After her return to her favorite characters with Mr. Sothern, Walter Tisne of the New York *Globe* asked her this:

"How did it feel to be *Beatrice* and *Juliet* and *Ophelia* again after *Mary Tudor*, *Barbara Frietchie* and *Colinette*?"

She said:

"I steep myself in the joy of it and I would I could play Shakespeare forever."

On another occasion—Boswell cannot now remember the date—she freed her mind by writing this:

Life is greater than literature and good poetry is not necessarily good drama—not of itself. But, in Shakespeare



you have both—life, action, heart, and then beautiful versification; great, glorious thoughts, splendid, musical words. That is what comes of having been an actor before becoming a poet, or, maybe from not knowing you were a poet until after you had been an actor and mastered all the “ficelles” of the profession. You have a parallel in Molière. You see, you can’t put on that attitude that is sometimes called “mental aloofness” when you are in a theater listening to a play. If you want to go in for brain gymnastics, stay at home, read Kant or Pascal or Xenophon in the original. In the theater, you should approach a play with your heart, not with your head. Why, I have played Browning when the audience did not understand the meaning of half the words and yet sat there alert, interested and moved.

In an article she wrote for the *Theater Magazine*, she said:

I have always found that the best effects I have made I have suggested but have not done.

The last time I played the Potion Scene in “Romeo and Juliet” I moved only three times—from the seat at the foot of *Juliet’s* bed to the *priedieu*, then to the center of the stage, where I sank upon my knees, and then back to the bed. My earlier interpretations of the scene were characterized by an eagerness to discover how many interesting bits of business I could create. I overloaded the reading with bric-à-brac. I went to the window, parted the curtains, and looked out upon the sunrise. I sought fresh air. I sank to my knees more than once; in a word, I was restless, and, however interesting I may have been, I cannot now feel that I was in any great degree convincing. Now my aim is only to move

when the impulse drives me to move. I say to myself, "What is this character's mood at this moment, what is her impulse?" If the answer comes clearly, "Why, to sit still," still I sit. But, if the thought naturally carries the inference of action, one can make no mistake in doing what one's artistic conscience as well as one's common sense commands.

The last time I played *Viola* in "Twelfth Night" in reading the lines beginning "She never told her love," I made an effort to keep everything still, even to the ends of my fingers. I aimed at achieving the whole effect by absolute repose. In my original conception of the rôle, I should have been appalled had any one advised such paucity of "business."

Experience has taught me that, especially in the plays of Shakespeare, we cannot go far wrong if we let the lines have the center of the stage and allow them to show the poet's meaning. We cannot aid him by a multitude of gestures or by creating of intricate "business." The best we can do, and all we can safely try to do, is to aid him by tenderness or impressiveness of voice, and by allowing something of his beauty and power to suffuse our eyes and shine in our countenances. To cite again the special instance, let the lines beginning "She never told her love" betray *Viola's* shyness. I am amazed when I remember how I endeavored to aid Shakespeare and emphasize this idea of shyness by coyly fingering *Viola's* little red cap. The result was that there was a great deal of red cap and not nearly enough of the maiden's perturbation in my reading of the lines.

A disheartening result of my observations of the present state of the art of acting has been my realization that there are so few players that can give and take in acting—making it necessary, therefore, for the chief person in the scene of the play to carry the spirit of the author's intention and the

thread of the various scenes quite unaided. To preserve his own poise he is compelled to concentrate mentally upon himself, making most performances very onesided, sometimes almost a monologue. The central personage of the play cannot permit himself to think what may be the feelings passing through the minds of the characters represented by the supporting players, because he secretly realizes that the feelings of the characters are not passing through the minds of the supporting players at all. In a word, they are not "giving and taking," they are not projecting themselves into the spirit of the play, they are not sounding the great note of reciprocity, which is one of the first essentials of true and spirited art.

Referring to vocal training she gratefully recalled Parsons Price and said: "He impressed upon my mind the fact that, if one were to make the best use of and to retain one's vocal gifts, one must live simply and keep early hours."

She controverted the opinion of some beginners that it is only necessary to look well and that looks are half the battle. She said, "I don't care what clothes I wear if I have something interesting to express.

"In my profession, too great store cannot be set upon the value of hard work, irrespective of mental endowment. In my case, it cannot be a source of pride that I have been a hard worker. I could not help it, and to the marvelously strong body with which I was endowed I probably owe the fact that my eagerness for toil has not snuffed out my existence."

Afterward she enlarged upon this thought. She said:

"I do not think a person has a right to go before the public without being prepared by the most faithful work, even to the comparatively unimportant details. There is so much to know and a true artist has to know so much! To be able to give out a great deal to your audiences and still keep twice as much in reserve, that is the great secret of power on the stage."

Once, with a small circle of friends after the play, the discussion turned to the question so often debated of how far an actor loses himself in the part he plays, and some one recalled the old story about Sam Johnson, who asked a playgoer of his time if he believed Garrick really felt all the villainy he portrayed as *Richard the Third*.

"Yes, undoubtedly," said the questioned one.

"Then he ought to be hanged every time he gives the performance," said Johnson.

"It is a matter of dual consciousness," said Miss Marlowe. "I am always conscious that I am Julia Marlowe, though at the same time I am *Rosalind* or *Viola* or *Juliet*, as the case may be. It is as when you are reading a novel. You are one entity, you understand—your own individual self, the part of you that reads. Then, there is the other self, the part of you that lives the character of the story, that enters into the tale and identifies itself with the people and the incidents. In acting it is the same thing. When I am on the stage, there are really two

of me. There is *Juliet*, there is Julia Marlowe, quite separate and distinct. *Juliet* may be all emotion and sensibility and, yet, Julia Marlowe at the same time be quite unmoved—may even be thinking of something else.

"I remember one instance especially. It happened when I was playing *Julia* in 'The Hunchback.' I wore a comb of which I was very fond. My part used to move me to tears, and, in a great scene where there was much action, my comb fell out of my hair to the floor. I was in tears, quivering all over with the intenseness of the act, yet I whispered to the man that was playing with me, 'Be careful not to step on my comb.' So, you see, in spite of feeling all of the strength and beauty of my assumed character, I was still enough myself to be anxious about the safety of a trinket. In fact, it seems to me that it would be almost like temporary madness to be entirely somebody else."

Utterance on the stage being under discussion, she said:

"Perfect stage diction is not a gift that comes with birth. It comes only with years of patient study. Through diction more than through any other quality the player lays bare before the eyes of his audience the soul of the character impersonated. Players spend weeks over costumes, make-up and other details, but they give scant study to the most necessary quality of all.

"If an actress is observant and attentive, she can, while playing even in minor parts, detect wherein

the chief actors fail to succeed in their methods. But, while observing another's methods, one should assiduously avoid the temptation to imitate another actor. One should shun as the deadliest sins all artificiality and imitation.

"Be yourself! Never imitate! Have a method and conviction of your own, or, rather, have a conviction, for the method comes itself."



## CHAPTER XIX

### OFF THE STAGE



UT of what elements success is to be welded, or by what devices it is to be conjured as a prestidigitator does tricks, are topics about which philosophers, amateur and professional, still love to hurl the verbal javelin. The venerable debate might be foreshortened by any fair look at such a career as this, where the necromancy is simple and clear. That good old rule about hard work and much of it shows first its honored head; an almost appalling habit of labor is probably an inheritance of her peasant ancestry. The unshakable courage that was never dismayed by any situation sounds like the moss-troopers of the border and may go back to the hawk-beaked sea rovers. All this is according to formula and the best authorities. But there is something else in this case. This woman won to success because she willed success, and never ceased to will it. She had made up her mind when still a girl that she would do certain things. So then she clamped herself to that purpose, scorned delights and lived laborious days, not in imagination but in coldest fact, and when she won the prize for which she had started, it was because she had never turned aside from it. After all,

Will did more for her than anything else. Nothing could stand in the way of that steadfast resolution; all the iron in the blood of the Strongs and the Covenanters seemed to be concentrated in her. It was the plaids of the MacDonalds about everything. If it is not right now, keep on until it is right and I know it is right and will stay right—this was the controlling idea. She had a patience like the temper of Saladin's scimitar, and a persistence like the mills of the gods. It was customary among certain writers to discourse of her great and unusual gifts for acting. These might have been twice as great and, without the character upon which they were planted, they would never have been heard of. Her character was the substance of these so-called gifts. Out of it she molded them all.

Many persons, aware of her high courage and unturnable resolution, expected, when they came to meet her for the first time, to find a person of an alarming development of the mandible, formidable manners and awesome bearing. They were always astonished to meet a curiously quiet, reserved, smiling, self-effacing woman, with a low melodious voice that was never raised, and an apparent disposition to get mentally out of sight. All her habitual and natural bearing belied the vigor of her achievements. She listened to what everybody else had to say and herself said as little as she could.

This was unusual enough so far as it went, but was eclipsed by another strange thing, which was that she had always a plainly genuine fondness for sim-

plicity, a gently philosophical outlook upon life and the people in it, no self-consciousness, no affectations, and seemed to keep herself in the background because she really preferred to hear other voices rather than her own. When she did loosen her speech, she usually talked with ease, fluency and directness, compact discourse, a trifle old-fashioned and bookish in verbalism, often enforcing what she said with references from her readings, which had been wide and managed with native wisdom. But this was when she was among her friends and those with whom she was in intellectual sympathy. In general, she had rather assent smilingly to the views or suggestions of others than to air her own.

Anything farther from the temperament that usually goes with the executive faculty is hard to imagine but this was hers. Commonly the executive has traits of the sanguine, the self-centered, or the aggressive; off the stage she had none of these. Off the stage she hated anything like controversy; whatever she might think of what was being said, she seldom disputed it unless it contained some heresy against her art.

Her command upon herself was chiefly acquired. She told me once that she had naturally a high temper and was in her childhood prone to fits of irritability and brooding. After she grew up her serenity gave way only when she had become convinced that she was being unfairly treated or imposed upon, or when a hopeless stupidity had long blocked the necessary road. About that time the

lightnings flashed and the thunders sounded, but the storm was usually of a moment and afterward there was fair weather again. Her confidence was extremely hard to gain, for she was always reticent and wary; but when she had formed a friendship she had for it an extraordinary loyalty, and sometimes paid dear for that virtue. In her mind her friends could do nothing unworthy nor lack any good trait, and whatever bitterness was latent in her nature came out only when she discovered that she had been deceived in her trust.

Rehearsals are beyond the layman's belief trying ordeals for the actor-manager. To induce one human being so far to surrender his individuality as to speak, walk, stand, and gesture according to the ideas of another human being is probably the most nerve-racking business known to man. Try it some time and unless you are an angel from heaven you will be more strongly tempted toward insensate rage than you ever were before in your life. It is really little wonder that most production directors stamp up and down the stage, shriek, rave and swear; still less that they are generally the worst hated men in the world. Job never was a stage director; if the devil had thought of that affliction he would probably have landed the good old man. "No! No! Idiot! Blockhead! Dolt! Do it this way—" is the ancient traditional speech of the person in charge of a rehearsal. Miss Marlowe found it simpler and more effective to waft an actor aside and pour into the porches of his ears the ideas she wished to have



*Photograph by Ira D. Schwarz*

THE LEARNED *Doctor Bellario*  
("Merchant of Venice")





portrayed. This also saved her from any necessity of taking the center of the stage and shouting general orders as if through a trumpet and from a captain's bridge. Her stage managers were never called upon to strain their initiative in the devising and directing of the picture. Until Mr. Sothern joined her, she was in effect her own stage manager.

For more than thirty years I was Miss Marlowe's chief advisor concerning her business affairs, a position to which I came by a series of accidents that aptly illustrate the shuttle-cock nature of the curious game we call life. When Miss Reilly was making her unlucky stab at fame in 1883, I was the dramatic critic of my father's newspaper at Davenport, Iowa. I was also the city editor, market reporter, and most of the rest of the staff. In the course of my varied duties I saw the Reilly company's performance of "Twelfth Night" and was greatly taken with the quaintly intelligent turn to the character given by the young woman that played *Maria*. Many others that wrote for the press at that time had noticed the same manifestation, but as I had never before heard of Fanny Brough my own tribute to her was quite spontaneous.

The next morning I happened to be bound, on some phase of my Pooh Bah vocation, to a metropolis on the line of the Water Tank & Whistling Post Railroad. The palatial accommodations allowed to tourists by this unpopular route consisted of a wheeled Noah's Ark attached to the butt end of a freight train. Report in our town said

that the car was the first that had been built in America and the railroad company had stolen it from a museum, but this may have been mere gossip. It happened that by the same contrivance the Reilly company was making what is called its "jump" to its next engagement—"jump" being in this instance of derisory significance, since it is a scientific fact that snails do not jump. As I entered the door the manager, from a corner recognized me and fell on my neck with a loud, glad cry. Poor man, I must suppose that in such conditions he would have rejoiced at any possible relief from the boredom of an appalling journey. Anyway, he had me forth, introduced me to the members of the company, then and thus undergoing transportation, and with the rest to *Maria*.

She proved to be a pallid young person, sitting by herself with her nose in a book. She had big and bright eyes, a high and wide forehead, a suggestion of anaemia, and a disapproval of casual gentlemen of the press that she had no hesitation in displaying. She gave me the tips of her fingers, an icy response to my congratulations, and I think about one-fourth of a glance of austere regard. Then she disappeared behind her book covers. The manager gazed at me in a way eloquent of pathos and of a patience tried with much suffering. Then he motioned me aside.

"Daft!" he said, "quite daft," and tapped his head sadly. "Don't mind her. It's just her way. She has the making of a great actress and is throw-

ing her chances away because she has no tact. It's a sad case. Come out and sit on the brake and have a smoke."

Five or six years later I was a writer on the staff of the *New York Herald* and, with other morceaux of what I deemed to be unusual excellence, contributed thoughts on the drama as it was presented from day to day. One afternoon the Great White Chief entered my room, laid on my desk two tickets for a performance that evening and vanished with the remark that I was not to write more than half a column. I took one glimpse at his offering and life turned all bitter to my taste. It was another novice. In a theater of far-away Brooklyn she was to do "Twelfth Night."

Only two weeks before I had traversed a similar corner of Malebolge, and the remembrance of acute suffering was still strong. Of the young woman that was this time to operate the rack, I had heard eulogies that I knew could be deserved only when the leopard should change his spots. Therefore I was one of those listless and wretched writers of whom I have spoken, the contingent that fell wearily into their seats and awaited with dread the rising of the curtain. It went up, a young woman walked out dressed as a boy, and at the first sound of her voice the whole gang of us straightened up to listen—and none with keener interest than I, for in her tones I recognized her as *Maria* of the wheeled Noah's Ark.

The next week I went to one of the Thursday

afternoon receptions of the Ingersolls and there she sat, industriously smiling and steadfastly holding her peace, as was her wont except when she was with intimates. She was gracious enough to say she recalled our meeting on the freight-train and polite enough to talk a little about *Maria*. Then the Colonel coming up, heard of these coincidences and induced me on the spot to interest myself in Miss Marlowe's business troubles.

It was an employment that necessitated many conferences, sometimes under trying conditions, as between the acts of a play, in the midst of a rehearsal or while undergoing the fatigue of travel. It seems a highly improbable statement about an artist that must necessarily have rather high-strung nerves, but, in all my interviews with Miss Marlowe, I never saw any exhibition of temperamental tantrums nor anything approaching them. Perhaps there is nothing else that better reveals innate character than repeated and detailed discussions upon urgent problems of dollars and cents. I always found her patient, attentive, reasonable, ready to listen to both sides of a question, and virtually impossible to dissuade when she had once decided upon any course. She had a mind so well adapted to business that she might have been a successful financier if she had not chosen to be an artist. This combination of an artistic sense with sound business instincts is the only instance in my experience with the single exception of Edmund Clarence Stedman.

She had unusual powers of concentration and

could wind her mind around a topic until she had mastered it. As sometimes happens in persons of this development, she had an odd little way of becoming oblivious to what was going on about her while with gathered brows she worked out in her mind and to her own satisfaction something that had been said or some train of thought. Meanwhile, a new topic might have come up, but she would not know it and would suddenly think aloud with the conclusion she had reached of the former matter. She loved philosophy and, in literature, loved poetry, for which she had a natural inclination, so that she could take any piece of verse, even a poem she had never before seen, and read it with perfect inflections and music. At such times, I was always interested to notice what skilled and intuitive use she made of her pauses; I think she had a better understanding of the value of the pause than any other person I have ever heard on or off the stage. It was one of the attributes that made her reading of a Shakespeare's Fourteener so effective.

Although she was not a trained musician, she had a natural aptitude for music and an almost infallible ear. She loved musical classicism. She was a friend and admirer of Theodore Thomas and when in Chicago always went to his great orchestral concerts.

Often when business was out of the way she would bring forth a new book and, before a little group of friends, start a discussion of something in it. I will offer one or two examples.

When Balfour's "Life of Robert Louis Steven-

son" came out and was followed by Henley's verjuiced comments, I was regretting that Henley chose to tell so many things that put Stevenson in an unpleasant light, little things and lesions in his character that it seemed to me spoiled the image of him that existed in the minds of his admirers.

"Not at all," said she with decision. "Tell the whole truth. If he did these things, record them. A biography that pictures a man as all of a piece is no biography at all. Nobody is built that way. Human life is not at all the simple, straight-ahead thing most biographers and novelists seem to think it. Nobody is always in the same mood. I suppose if a man should come along that was of such an order he would be the most awful bore that ever lived. Every moment he would be pretending something else and never know the luxury of being himself. We have strange gusts of this and that and a thousand different impulses. The wonder is that we get through as well as we do. The moment you write of a man as if he were above these weaknesses you make him supernatural and away goes all interest in him. If we knew the truth about any man or woman we call great, we should find exactly such slips as Henley tells. The fact that we have these complexities and still go on and win in spite of them is much more important than the every-day virtues that some biographers make so great. Weak men allow these little traps and pitfalls to snare and finish them. Strong men like Stevenson go on in spite of them. But their suc-



cess in such conditions is more admirable than if a platter full of perfect behaviors had been handed to them at birth. Pedestal worship is not biography and does the world little good."

I said: "Oh, I don't know. How about Boswell? He was always doing the pedestal act before his hero and see how the world regards him."

She said: "Boswell? Why, that's a case exactly in point. I know he was always talking about his 'great and learned friend,' but he mocked him, also, and what is more important, often showed him in a most unamiable but no doubt perfectly correct light. Suppose Boswell had left out all those occasions when Johnson lost his temper or was peevish, or foolish and inaccurate, or illogical and blindly prejudiced, or merely bull-headed. The world would long ago have forgotten Boswell. Why, what did Johnson himself say about this very thing? I can't quote the exact words, but it was something to the effect that if a man is trying to write a panegyric, that is one thing; but if he is to write a life he must put in the bad as well as the good."

I said she forgot that Johnson argued on both sides of that question.

"He did," she came back, "but only as what you call in your detestable slang, a stunt. His own practise in his 'Lives' shows what he really believed. No, tell the truth. Tell weakness as well as strength, defeats as well as victories. Everybody has both, Stevenson with the rest. You don't think all of his stories are great, do you?"

I said I thought that sometimes, as in "Ebb Tide" and the "Black Arrow," he seemed to forget what he had started to say.

"Well, then, if he sometimes did faulty work, he sometimes wobbled on his path through life. But, in spite of the wabblings and the lapses, he was still great and in the main good. There is some help and inspiration in a flesh and blood man making a heroic struggle against himself as well as against outside odds. But there is neither in the life of a man that never seems to have to fight these troubles."

She had her own share of human inconsistencies. Toward the world and her work she had a face of iron resolution, so that when she said "No!" she eliminated all room for argument. At the same time she was one of the most sensitive beings that ever lived; among her friends, where she could be herself, exquisitely sensitive. Once she had back with her on the stage during a performance a dear and life-long friend, Mrs. ——. The play was "Twelfth Night" and the time one of blizzard and tempest. The steam pipes in the house went on strike or something, for the place was uncomfortable. The audience partook of the general depression.

"What is the matter with this house tonight?" said Miss Marlowe after the first act. "They don't seem to warm up."

"Well, Julia, I'll tell you," said Mrs. ——. "You're not acting as well as usual."

Two or three minutes later Mrs. Woodward came

upon Miss Marlowe in a state of evident and great distress.

"What on earth is the matter?" says Mrs. Woodward.

"Nothing," says the star, "only Mrs. —— thinks I can't act."

Yet for all printed criticism she had a wholly different feeling—if any. She used to yawn and fall asleep in her chair over the priceless thoughts of some deep browed seer of the daily press lecturing her about her sad lapses from tradition's sanctified ways and then be fired with a devastating wrath by some reflection on the actor's calling or place in society. One day her physician came to see her. She received him with her usual smiling self-empire, but when he shook her hand he jumped.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" cried he. "Your hand is like ice. Here, let me take your pulse. It's going like a race horse. What has happened to upset you?"

"This has happened," she said, and producing a book written by some High Priest or High Priestess of the Adorable Modernism turned up a page whereon actors were derided as "mummers" and ridicule was poured on the notion that they could know anything about Shakespeare. To these enlightening comments was added a vicious attack upon Dr. Furness of the *Variorum*, because he had quoted from the prompt-books of Edwin Booth. No attack upon herself could have induced any such excitement.

She had a genuine passion about art and would walk ten miles any time to see a good painting. Color she loved more than form, which seems rather odd in view of the fact that she was born with so good an ear for music. She liked to analyze pictures and try to find out the source of power in them. Once when with a group of friends she was coming away from the Luxembourg she fell to talking about LePage's "Harvest Field," and said she admired it greatly. She said:

"He put into that peasant girl's face a greater depth of meaning and suggestion than I can now recall in another modern imaginative painting, though John Sargent gets it in some of his portraits. The girl is awake, the man is asleep beside her on the field, and she is pondering things about him and life and the future, very wonderful to see. How is it that so many painters and actors overlook expression through the eyes? The eyes usually tell more than the mouth. Da Vinci never forgot it. Look at the unfathomable depths of meaning not only in the 'Mona Lisa,' which you will think of first, but in the heads of the men in the 'Last Supper.' If we were deprived of speech, we could tell everything with the eyes if we were to study them enough."

Some one in the party remarked that she seemed to find a different favorite among the pictures every time she went to the Luxembourg or the Louvre.

"Why, of course!" she said. "We're not always in the same mood. You might say that no one is ever in the mood today that possessed one yesterday, or the same this afternoon that one was in this morning. One picture suits one mood best, another suits another. It is the same way about plays. Thoughtful persons love the great tragedies, but they would go mad if fed on nothing else."

Some one said, "What does that leave of what are called principles of criticism?"

She thought a moment, and said:

"Principles of criticism? What principles of criticism? There's only one—the individual reaction. Well, the mood rules that with the rest."

She loved wholesomely funny stories, had a good stock of them and could tell them as effectively as anybody I have met, for she could imitate well and had a perfect sense of climax.

She held to the singular notion that intelligent conversation was the first object of social intercourse and the music in the average hotel dining-room or restaurant the last news from the jungle.

"It must be for persons that have no thoughts or are incapable of them that we have such things," she said. "Civilization must still be at a low ebb if the best we can do when we meet is to make a blare of trumpets when there are so many interesting things to talk about. In some places the bellowing and scraping of the instruments is so loud I must make signals to the waiter to pass the butter. I think Milton had a New York restaurant in mind

when he spoke of 'the rout that made the hideous roar.' Alas! they're mad! [This with regret—then—] The joy of socialized life is the exchange of ideas. Well, in one of these modern restaurants you might as well try to exchange ideas with a cyclone. I had rather drink tea in an attic and be at peace."

She had an odd habit of frank utterance that sometimes disconcerted and possibly pained persons when she had no such intent. Once she was crossing the ocean on a steamship of great fame (for those days) and a friend was crossing behind her on another. The wireless telegraph had but lately been introduced and Miss Marlowe thought to entertain her friend with a message. So she wrote out to be wirelessly to her:

Sea calm, weather delightful, food perfectly dreadful, called a steward and gave the message to be sent to the other ship. In about ten minutes the first and third officers, chief steward and first assistant steward were at her door, caps in hand, humbly begging to know what was the matter with the food and what could be done to please her. The first officer explained that the sending of such a despatch would greatly injure the steamship's reputation and might cost some of them their jobs.

"Oh, well, then," said the placable lady, "don't send it."

"But what is the matter with the food?" inquired the chief steward, poignantly.



"Why, nothing, except that it isn't edible. But never mind [cheerfully] I have some bread of my own and some marmalade and I can live until we reach shore."

The visitors departed with sour faces. But they had their revenge. At dinner that night (she had all her meals in her stateroom) the chief steward himself appeared with an assistant, solemnly with his own hands laid her table and brought out a dinner he had cooked himself specially for her delight. She thanked him warmly and he never knew that as soon as he had disappeared the viands that represented the glory of his art were dropped out of the port hole. They were worse than the regular menu.

She kept well, or more accurately to speak, she fought down the ill-health that pursued her, by taking long, rapid walks, by rigorously holding to her regular schedule of hours and by unfailing attention to her diet. She drank the fresh air with the avidity of an old-time hunter on the fells and mortified the flesh with the stern satisfaction of a covenanting Cumberlander. It was an odd combination to exist in one mortal frame. If she thought anything, no matter how innocent, likely to interfere in even the slightest degree with her highest efficiency in her work, she rejected it, and nothing could induce her to look with tolerance upon it. The smoking of cigarettes by women never ceased to jar a little upon her sensibilities; for herself she would as soon have smoked a section-hand's clay

pipe. Nuts she cut out of her menu; for a different reason. Nuts were held to be bad for the voice, the ever sacred voice.

Next to walking, her pet exercises were skating and swimming. On skates she could skim like a bird; Orth Stein Harper must have had her in mind when he wrote those wonderful verses about the woman skating. From the beginning of her career, she kept the fires burning before that one great hope to have a home, a place into which she could go and shut the door and shut out with it the world of struggle and noise. She was always picturing herself alone with her books and no stage to worry about, and the nearest she ever came to that vision was the one summer at Highmount. There was something fateful about it; always afterward for demands of health or of business she must spend her summers abroad. She bought a house on Riverside Drive, New York, but was never able to inhabit it and at last reluctantly sold it. Sometimes she rented furnished houses and lived in them so long as she could. Once the great desire seemed about to be realized; she found a house in England exactly suited to her and made all arrangements to dwell in it and enjoy the peace she longed for. Then the War and other contingencies came and shattered also that pleasing prospect.

Jeannette Gilder, who knew her well, used to say that she had never met a woman in whom the domestic instinct seemed stronger. "Always she must be mothering somebody or something," said

Miss Gilder. "If it isn't the children of the stage or at the *matinée* or some one she has adopted, it's her dogs." Solomon, the black cocker spaniel, was for years her chief pet. When he died of old age, she was heart-broken. Then came a succession of other dog favorites and, at last, Sun Yat Sen, a queer little Pekingese dog with a head like a copy in little of the old carvings of Chinese lions. In a wicker crate inside of what looked like a valise, he accompanied her on all her travels. Hotels that objected to dogs went down on her black list.

She was an ardent woman suffragist, on which point she differed radically with Miss Gilder. "The women that oppose woman suffrage," she once remarked, "are like the dog in the manger. If they do not wish to go to the polls and vote they can always stay away, but that is no reason why they should try to block the efforts of women that do wish the ballot and would use it if they had it. Clearly, such women are entitled to it."

She was a warm friend and admirer of Susan B. Anthony, with whom she seemed to have some mental affinity. The last public entertainment Miss Anthony attended was a Marlowe Shakespearean revival at Rochester. When it was over, Miss Anthony and her sister went back upon the stage and had a long talk with Miss Marlowe. When they parted, Miss Anthony said:

"Julia, you are the only actress I go to see now."  
It was their last meeting.

Ada Patterson was one of the few newspaper

writers that ever won to confidential relations with her, a distinction she achieved in many visits and by patient effort.

"Very few persons that write, either for the magazines or the newspapers," said Miss Patterson in 1909 "ever get to Julia Marlowe, and yet she is one of the most charming women of the stage to meet socially." She wondered why it was that a woman that held the first place in the American theater should be so totally unknown otherwise to the public that followed her. She asked about it and Miss Marlowe said:

"I think there is a special journalist conscience. I have met newspaper men and women that were perfectly delightful and I liked them immensely, except that after I had been with them for an hour or two, I felt like one of those butterflies that has been gently impaled upon a pin and made to flutter for the benefit of the world at large.

"So often have I been made to serve for a newspaper holiday that I decided not to know any more representatives of the press; and yet, personally, I think they are the most interesting class."

One of her peculiarities, as Miss Patterson observed, was an almost morbid hatred of slang. She would not use it herself and if in conversation some one else used it, the clouds would begin to gather on her black brows. Of all the stage women she had ever met, Miss Patterson said, Julia Marlowe spoke the most careful English. When asked about the origin of this practise, Miss Marlowe said she

had long trained her mind to avoid thinking in the vernacular.

"I always insist that every thought, whether I voice it or not, shall be well-rounded and couched not only in language clear to me but in the best words I can find."

Miss Patterson thought she was never so beautiful on the stage as when she returned from one of her long walks with her hands full of wild flowers she had picked. At dinner, some guest brought up the everlasting subject of elevating the stage, prompted by a magazine article in which the subject had been dressed up again for general consumption. Miss Marlowe said:

"It can be done only by educating the public taste and the best way is to introduce into the schools the study of the best dramatic literature."

Somebody mentioned Clara Morris. Miss Marlowe said:

"She was surely the greatest dramatic genius this country ever produced. She taught me the greatest dramatic lesson, how thoroughly one can abandon one's self in a situation if one only feels it enough. The day I saw her play *Denise* was one of the milestones in my career."

Supporting companies being under discussion, she said:

"Not the most skilful actor but the most pliable is the most useful in minor rôles. As a piece of furniture too fine for a room stands out unpleasantly so will too big an actor in too small a part."

Miss Patterson noticed that she had a passion to gather books, "Good books, all of them, old books most of them." She also discerned the actress' favorite color was old rose, and her favorite style for domestic architecture was the colonial. "The long, unbroken line rather than the curve, she conceives to be the line of beauty. This conception she shows in her gowns and wraps as well as in her houses and their furnishings." At this time, she was living in a rented house in East Fifty-fourth Street, New York.

"Ever since I have been on the stage," she said, "I have been conscious of one abiding wish. I wanted some time to live so that I could see the sun rise every morning. Another was that I might live a quiet life, away from strangers who stare, just among my books and my friends. I want to die quietly in a country place. I do not want to die as Irving did, as Sarah Bernhardt says she wants to do, in the harness. I am willing to live most of my life in the theater, but I want to die far from it in some abode of peace."

"When she went forth for one of her cherished walks in the country," Miss Patterson wrote, "she was properly gowned for it. She wore a short skirt, usually of brown cloth; with this a short jacket; a Norfolk with a belt. The boots were high, moderately heavy and laced; the hat was a soft felt. Her custom was to take an automobile until she was far enough into the country, then get out, send the chauffeur ahead to meet her five miles off and



then start upon a delicious walk along the country road."

Sometimes, interesting discussions would grow out of her steadfast insistence upon the actor's contributions to the sum of human culture.

Once, at Sils Maria, she took from its shelf a copy of George Santayana's "Reason in Art" and read aloud a passage in which Dr. Santayana tries to establish the essential inferiority of acting as an art. The movement and speech that are wanting to sculpture, he says, "the stage may be called upon to supply; but it cannot supply them without a terrible sacrifice, for it cannot give permanence to its expression. Acting is for this reason an inferior art, not, perhaps, in difficulty, and certainly not in effect, but inferior in dignity, since the effort of art is to keep what is interesting in existence, to recreate it in the eternal, and this ideal is half-frustrated if the representation is itself fleeting and the rendering has no further subsistence than the inspiration that gave it birth. By making himself, almost in his entirety, the medium of his art, the actor morally diminishes, and as little of him remains in his work, when this is good, as of his work in history. He lends himself without interest and, after being *Brutus* at one moment and *Falstaff* at another, he is not more truly himself. He is abolished by his creations, which, nevertheless, cannot survive."

Boswell ventured to suggest that the reasoning was wrong because it was based on an impossible theory of art. The effort of art was not, never had

been and never could be "to keep what is interesting in existence" nor to "recreate it in the eternal." If art had any such objects it would be of all men's activities the most futile, because if we turned to any of the arts that Dr. Santayana ranked above acting, not one had in itself any eternity nor any permanence, nor anything but the most fleeting and ephemeral existence. Compared with the life of the world, and of man upon it, sculpture, painting, and architecture were as transitory as acting. But as a matter of fact, the one single effort of art was to transfer a feeling; and the achievement in art was the greatest that was most successful in effecting such a transfer.

In all this Miss Marlowe concurred. She said:

"If Dr. Santayana means that because acting leaves no material image to which we may return the next day it is therefore inferior, he is all wrong. The material and physical statue or painting is nothing but a symbol of feeling and really no more permanent than the symbols the actor uses. Suppose one to be much moved by a painting. Suppose one were never to see that painting again. Nothing would be left to one then but the effect of the feeling the painting transferred. Exactly this and nothing more is left after looking at any statue, at any other work of art. Well, but this is precisely what is left after any great work of the actor's art. This is the end of all, the final residue, the sum that is left in any case. No human being can show that it is in any degree inferior in the case of the actor's

art, in any way less effective or in any way less permanent."

Some one said that at the Paris Exposition of 1900 His, \* the French painter, exhibited an appealing picture of *Ophelia*, which had since disappeared from public view. Whoever observed it attentively must have still persisting echoes of the feeling it transferred. But suppose such a one to have seen Miss Marlowe portray *Ophelia* on the stage, embodying it to ear as well as to eye. It would be preposterous to say that the echo of feeling from the painter was in any way stronger than the echo of feeling from the work of the actress; stronger, or better, or more dignified, or more enduring, or worthier, or more exalting or more truly representing a feeling transferred. It was, in fact, none of these; the echo of feeling from the work of the actress was the superior.

"The painter and the sculptor can't do more or better," said Mr. Sothern. "How many of the works of Phidias can the experts catalogue as extant? Has his influence upon art and men been confined to this little list? How many lines of Sappho are left? Is it this little handful that profoundly moved and inspired the poetry of her own times and has influenced poetry ever since? What happened in these cases and thousands more is that the artist succeeded in transferring a feeling and

\* René Charles Edmond His, a native of Colombes, France, a pupil of Lefebvre. His *Ophelia* showed her in the water, some of her flowers still in her hair and one hand.

the effect of that feeling transferred has gone on and will go on always."

Miss Marlowe wished to know why, then, Dr. Santayana had been moved to make remarks so unfair to the actor and his art. By common consent this lapse was charged up to the good old Rogues-and-Vagabonds notion. All the sage moralists as they go along must take hacks at the actor. Preachers, for instance. Then Miss Marlowe said:

"One thing they always overlook. There is no effect without a cause and every effect becomes in turn a cause that produces another effect. Effects are not lost and the chain of causes and effects can't stop. The physical image of an actor passes and is gone, but the effect of what he does goes on, an endless chain of causes and effects forever. Suppose you see to-day an excellent piece of art work. If its feeling is successfully transferred to you that feeling lives in your mind or spirit or consciousness or whatever you elect to call it, as a kind of noble exaltation. But it doesn't go to sleep there. It is reflected in thoughts and actions that, in turn, become the causes of other thoughts and actions that will produce other thoughts and actions in you and in others and others till the end of time. Well, then, what difference does it make whether the feeling you get is transferred through the symbols of painting, sculpture or acting? The transferring of the feeling is the thing, and the symbols are the best that best do the work of transference."

Some one suggested that this would depend upon individual peculiarities.

To this she agreed, and added her favorite philosophy, that in the end everything came back to the personal reaction.

She had her own notions about every phase of her work. Persons that closely observed her methods must have noticed that she always took curtain calls with whatever other member or members of the cast might have been with her in the scene that the audience was applauding, but never had the curtain rung upon the scene. Many years ago, some one asked her why she had made this rule. She said:

"The audience is applauding the artist individually for his or her efforts in the scene completed. It is not applauding the character he or she has been representing. Therefore, he or she should step outside the frame and not confound the part with the personality of the artist. This is better art and better sense."

In Boston, once, she was asked how she liked to play to Boston audiences. She said: "It is a delight. The knowledge of Shakespeare is felt everywhere. One is apt to imagine when opening in any new part in Boston that the performance is lacking in fire and that the audience is bored and listless. But silence in this case is merely complete absorption in the part and the scene. When the actor once perceives this to be the fact, it is the greatest possible spur to his artistic effort. To play to an

audience that seems to have imbibed so much of the poetry of Shakespeare is a great pleasure."

She had a great hatred of gossip, whether about herself or anybody else, and denounced the practise that had sprung up of making the most intimate affairs of private life the subject of magazine revelations and the like—the thing some one has called "the magazine disrobing play." For some years she had been besieged to write her reminiscences until the pressure became annoying. About every other day some editor of a popular magazine would conceive this bright thought and write to her about it or send an ingenious ambassadress to negotiate with her. "Something piquant," said one of these prophets, "piquant—spicy, you know. That's what we want."

Miss Marlowe thought she had been bothered long enough. So she took her pen one day and produced a General Order to All Concerned that she would write no reminiscences and retail no gossip and purvey to magazine readers nothing piquant and spicy. But she had in mind four articles about the theater that she thought she might some day wish to write and of these she was willing to treat. I suppose the editor read this with a wry mouth; but anyway he sent his young emissary back with instructions to find out what would be the subjects of the four articles. After which negotiations were broken off.

The subjects she had chosen related only to technical phases of the actor's art.



She was an essential and instinctive democrat. She never left the theater without a kindly "Good night!" to the stage hands and there was always some one she was helping, although I am strictly forbidden to go into that. One of the greatest collections of clippings, photographs and articles referring to her was patiently gathered through more than thirty years by the watchman of a Chicago theater to whom she had once addressed a word of thanks. She liked all things plain, simple, and genuine. Once she made a trip along the Thames in England and by preference stopped at the least pretentious inns. She said afterward she enjoyed them better than the greatest hotel.

I think no person has had more devoted friends. She drew them to her by a genuine and inexhaustible good-will.

She was an indefatigable reader, but with the severest taste that I ever encountered. Prose fiction she cared little about and almost never read; in prose the essay had the top of her choice. George Meredith's essay on Comedy she regarded as the best example of this class of literature and always had a copy near her. She liked it because of its searching analysis and the sure bases he made for his conclusions. But she had rather read poetry any time. Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Burns—they were never displaced in her pantheon. Pencil in hand was always her fashion of reading; so she could delight herself with many marks on the margin. I have here an old copy of Swinburne's "Atalanta

in Calydon" (Chatto and Windus) that she once possessed, and every page is crisscrossed with her penciled comments. Perhaps the unerring sense with which she picked out the finest of the fine lines is as good an indication as any other of her mental operations. She not only joyed in the "Before the beginning of years," the great Spring Song and the "We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair," but she let not a well-turned phrase escape her in the lines of the chorus. The death speech of *Meleager* she particularly admired. At the side of the page she has written, "From here on—most extraordinary!" and at the end, "Indeed, indeed, 'a noble wisdom and fair words.' Amazing piece of work! Clean cut, beautifully proportioned, all Doric, Doric!" and again at,

More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that  
live without stain!

"Wonderful!"

She had a horror of the form of intellectual perversion that is called free verse, and repeatedly pointed out that it was merely a masqueraded rhapsodical prose that owed all its poetic semblance to its typographical arrangement.

"If all the printers were to go on strike against it," she said, "we should forget in six days that there had been such a pestilence."

To the *Century Magazine* William Winter (after his conversion) contributed an article en-

titled, "The Art of Julia Marlowe" in which he reviewed her "long, successful, beneficent and important career." He wrote:

Her nature is uncommonly self-possessed and poised. Her resort to the stage, however accidental, was natural, because she not only felt histrionic impulse, as many do, but she was endowed with histrionic faculty, which comparatively few possess. Throughout her conduct of life there is prescience. She is independent in thought, but independent with that open-minded reasonableness that bases independence upon solid conviction and that earnestly seeks for knowledge. . . . She is "gleg at the uptak," as the Scotch have it, quickly grasping the significance of suggestion and, where applicable, quickly utilizing them. She is well grounded in the traditions of most of the standard parts she has played; indeed, as to those that she played in her earlier years she has, I believe, more knowledge than is possessed by any other actress now on our stage.

In speaking, she uses at times and often with striking effect, a singular, measured, lingering enunciation, as if orally caressing the words, and, coincidentally, assumes a distraught manner, as if her mind were wrapped in an awed, fearful, wonderingly speculative contemplation of thought occurrent to it and unconsciously being uttered. In private life, I have found her one of the few persons with whom *conversation* is possible, one that pays as much attention to what is said as she does to what she says.

A woman reporter in San Francisco noted that Miss Marlowe never capitalized her looks or her celebrity.

This was true. At all times she had an instinct

to flee, when off the stage, from the least personal observation. "There's Julia Marlowe!" were the words she dreaded to hear when she was on the street. This was another reason for the simplicity of attire she invariably followed. She never wore jewelry nor other ornaments, chose the plainest gowns and hats, and when she entered a hotel dining-room, for instance, sought to slip into the least conspicuous seat and nearest the door. She clung tenaciously to the belief that off the stage the actor had an inviolable privacy of life, and his relations with the public ceased at the stage entrance.

There were many curious manifestations of the personal and professional interest she aroused wherever she went. When a Sothern-Marlowe engagement had been announced, the attendants in the public libraries always knew of it by the sudden increase in the calls for Shakespeare's plays. In the library at Providence, Rhode Island, to give one example, are forty-three copies of "Twelfth Night." When Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe were about to perform in that play, every one of these copies would be in the hands of readers. She seemed to exert an extraordinary and potent charm upon young girls. It was usual to see, after the end of one of her plays, the stage alley blocked with a crowd of these admirers waiting to see and cheer her as she went to her carriage. The instant the door opened and she appeared, a shrill chorus went up of "Here she is!" and often she would be showered with flowers.

Sometimes, the crowd that waited to see her after the play became so great and so annoying that she resorted to a ruse to escape its attentions. She would put her outer cloak and hat upon Mary Daly, her faithful attendant of so many years, cover her with a heavy veil and send her out to get into the waiting carriage. Immediately, a roar of cheers would arise and Miss Daly would sail away to plaudits. Then the crowd would disperse, Miss Marlowe would slip quietly into the street and walk unrecognized to her hotel.

Even there she was likely to find the entrances thronged with her loyal young followers. There was so little of the stagy about her ways off the stage that while she sought to avoid notice she was gracious and tolerant to persons that made her acquaintance and was, in consequence, subjected to a loss of time and an accumulation of attention she could not well afford. When the late Frank Colfax was her stage manager, he strove to save her from these callers, and even remonstrated with her for allowing them to see her.

"Why do you submit to it?" he said. "They merely take up your time when you ought to be resting."

"Oh, well," she said, "I suppose it is a real joy to them, and none of us has so much of that one can afford to be miserly about giving it to somebody else if one can."

Her heavy mail she tried, so far as she could with her secretary's help, to answer. No letter from a

child ever went disregarded, and she preserved many specimens of the appeals of her youthful admirers.

Here is one written with a lead pencil on a piece of paper upon which lines had been laboriously ruled.

MY. DEAR. MIS. MARLOWE. I AM. A. LITTLE.  
BOY. 6. YEARS. OLD. WILL. YOU. PLES. LET. ME.  
SEE. YOU. SOME. TIME. OFF. THE STAGE.

YOUR. FREND

FREDDY. BERMAN.

She had decided convictions about racial prejudice. To her mind, all the so-called races and colors of men were one. She deplored the rank injustice with which colored persons are treated in America, and consistently showed herself too broad of mind to accept these artificial distinctions. She went once to a colored theater in Washington when there were only two other white persons in the audience. For the *American Hebrew* she wrote an explicit statement of her feelings about this subject. "Art knows no creed, no race," she began. "Whatever nationality or religion brings to art, and both contribute much, art is a sphere wherein hatred has no place; where men and women—Jew and Gentile—meet on neutral, common ground, without rancor, without prejudice, without handicap. In its true estate, art is the land of real democracy—a commonwealth of spiritual values.



"It is a splendid thought that art has no petty boundary line of racial feeling, that it is impossible for it to shut itself within a petty shell of Jingoism, but must of necessity receive all creative offerings with a broad and open spirit of grateful acceptance and recognition."

She suggested that, as art was this common ground and "the highest expression of earth-bound people," it would also be found the means by which the vexatious problems of inter-relationship, not only of men and women in general but of nations, would be led to an adjustment. She reminded her readers that "as one judges any profession, so one must judge a race, by its best types and representatives." She spoke with appreciation of the great services of the Jews to all departments of art, recounting great actors, dramatists, painters, musicians and writers that had come from the Jewish people, and paid eloquent tribute to the steadfast support the Jews in America give to Shakespeare and the best drama. "We who devote ourselves to Shakespeare have noted with gratification that the spectators that come to see his plays comprise a large percentage of Jews. It is noteworthy, this reaction to the finer things of life, which reveals the Jews as a particularly sympathetic people."

As to the problem, which at times seems to be acute, of a *modus vivendi* between citizens of the Jewish faith and persons not yet wholly emancipated from the spirit of the Dark Ages, Miss Marlowe had this to say:

"The closer relationship between Jews and Gentiles must eventually come through mutual understanding and its consequent forbearance and sympathy on both sides. When we approach the problem through art, we find a greater hope and surer way to reach this understanding and revaluation of each other. For, as it is evident that art holds the best there is in the mind and soul, nowhere is there a more practical ground on which to come together. A people that has contributed to art the strength, the virility, the imagination, the sensitiveness of perception that has been the offering of the Jewish people, has much to give to the Gentiles."

She thought that both Jew and Gentile needed to exercise a more thoughtful consideration, and to take more account of the differences of temperament. "Courtesy and kindness are the great open sesame to the understanding that is absolutely necessary before complete approachment may be established." When the irritations resulting from misunderstandings were removed and "the souls of the Jew and the Gentile are bared to each other, all prejudice must disappear. . . . Ignorance is the great destroyer of peace and good-will," and she appealed to Jews and Gentiles to utilize the occasion of their common festival (the Passover for one and Easter for the other) to seek a better understanding and new respect for one another.

She appeared sometimes at important meetings of women's clubs or charitable entertainments. The New York correspondent of the *Indianapolis Star*

telegraphed to his journal an account of such an appearance:

First, the chairman announced that "by way of an invocation, Julia Marlowe will read Kipling's 'Recessional' after which she will give a few other poems." Immediately there stepped on the platform a girlish figure clad in gray, with black pumps and a black hat, and absolutely no jewelry. She looked at the audience a moment, her lips smiled a welcome and recognition, and then we heard that marvelous voice. Never before did the "Recessional" seem so full of meaning; it was deeply solemn, it was imploring, it was, indeed, a prayer. What a contrast to the many voices of women and men to which we had been listening! Her rendition of several of the sonnets of Shakespeare was matchless, and when she uttered the words, "simple truth—misnamed simplicity," the real character of truth stood forth in matchless beauty. How seldom is the English language spoken with absolute correctness of diction! To hear it thus uttered, and in the voice of Julia Marlowe, is a privilege.

As to her personal appearance, when she was playing in San Francisco in 1905, Blanche Partington recorded these impressions:

Julia Marlowe is beautiful in the best sense of the word, her face musical with meaning, instinct with every enchantment of line and tint. One begins at that maddening dimple in the chin, of course Herrick would have sung it as the grave of many lovers. Sober, I can only say it fits most enticingly under the laughing lips, full and red. Herrick's alchemy would have made pearls of the little white teeth, all as even as kernels of corn, that glint in the lovely

and frequent laughter. Comedy sits on the tip of the nose, piquantly upturned, yet of a cut and size that spell both beauty and brains. The eyes, heavy-lidded, full, clear, brilliant——

"What color are they, the eyes?" The interviewer suddenly found herself stammering the question that was perplexing her.

Laughter filled them as their owner quite simply leaned to the light and said, "Gray-blue, like yours."

The reporter confided that on occasion her own eyes had been called green.

"On occasion, mine are green," Miss Marlowe comfortably concurred.

Another interviewer mentioned the fact that a resemblance had been noticed between Miss Marlowe and some one else.

"Lots of people look like me," Miss Marlowe replied laughingly. "Or, rather, I look like lots of others. I have a cosmopolitan face, or, rather, a composite face, which is another way of calling it commonplace."

Two guiding principles she followed assiduously, to guard her health and to keep in touch with the world's advance. She read the most serious newspapers and clipped from them everything that indicated the permanent activities and progress of man.

"The first requirement of an actress is to keep as much humanity in her daily life as possible," she said. "If one draws away from a natural life, it shows in one's work. No dramatic artist that does not follow the common sense laws of health and

right living can ever hope to penetrate to the heart of the audience."

The error about her natural predilection for comedy was continually being repeated by critics that saw her only in comedy parts and by interviewers that heard her laugh and make witticisms. The fact remained, however, and was familiar to all her close friends, that the natural bent of her mind was serious and her jesting, as is so often the case with such temperaments, was a handy mask. Whenever she could, she chose serious topics for conversation.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE NEW *JEANNE D'ARC*; AND *SALOME*



THE season of 1906-1907 was made remarkable in this story by three important additions to her repertoire and by her first appearance on a foreign stage. Since 1902, she had kept in her mind the purpose to act *Rautendelein* in Gerhardt Hauptmann's "The Sunken Bell," and, as the destinies of the joint stars were now so largely in their own hands, she felt that the time had come to carry out her purpose. She had in Mr. Sothern a more than sympathetic coadjutor in this design. He had given to the play its first American performances, showing it in a production memorable for splendor, good taste, and careful accoutering. Impressed with its spiritual and poetic significance, he had spared no expense and research to afford it worthy setting. He had secured from Charles Henry Meltzer a new metrical translation of rare quality; he had employed Aimé Lachaume to compose new incidental music; he carried with him a special orchestra to interpret this music; he had elaborate scenery that had been painted under his own supervision. Of *Heinrich* he made one of the greatest of his portrayals. Yet, the piece had never won the popularity he and



Miss Marlowe felt it deserved. The public did not know it, they said; that was the only trouble, and they had mind upon an attractive revival that would make better known a drama so great and so unusual.

Besides this, they planned to produce Sudermann's "John the Baptist," not before done in this country, and a new play on Joan of Arc written by Percy Mackaye. They were also to retain "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Twelfth Night," and "The Merchant of Venice." It will be seen that this constituted a heavy list for one company to carry. Eleven baggage cars were needed to transport the scenery.

The season began in Philadelphia, October 15, 1906, with the initial performance of "Jeanne d'Arc." It was a dramatic event of the first order; every seat in the house had been sold a week before the opening night. The play was in verse; at once it was admitted to be powerfully conceived and ably written. Mr. Mackaye attained to a rare distinction by striving to follow accepted history, adding only what seemed to be necessary to bind the story together and make it possible upon the stage. His first scene was of the young folk of Domremy amusing themselves on the green and *Jeanne* already occupied with her dreams and trances. This enabled him to start quickly with his pictures and incidents. The showing of some of *Jeanne's* visions gave an opportunity for great stage effects that Mr. Sothern, careful and judicious producer, utilized to the ut-

most. The second act is concerned with *Jeanne's* first appearance before the *Dauphin* and the methods, splendidly adapted to stage effects, by which she convinces him of her mission and verity. The third act shows her as a soldier leading the victorious French troops in an assault against the English. The fourth deals with her greatest triumph and the crowning of *Charles* in Rheims. The fifth is her trial and death. Mr. Mackaye depended for his love interest upon the episode of *D'Alençon*, charmingly played by Mr. Sothern. By bringing *D'Alençon*, enthralled with his love, into *Jeanne's* cell just before her last hour, he managed a parting scene of poignant sorrow and truly great power.

The piece was probably too sombre for modern taste and could hardly be otherwise with such a story. Mr. Mackaye made conscientious effort to lighten with extraneous comedy, but these were not and could not be enough to relieve the persistent note of tragedy. On all sides, the exquisite art of the production received eloquent praise, chiefly due to Mr. Sothern's studious labors. The unusual lighting effects made demands upon his utmost resources of skill and knowledge. A feature was the incidental music, which had been specially written by Professor Converse, of the Harvard School of Music. Afterward, he wove this together into a suite for the grand orchestra that became a classic.

The despatches sent out by telegram that night described the production as a "tremendous hit." A car-load of New York admirers went over to see it

and came back deeply impressed. As usual there was a liberal but somewhat disconcerting choice of opinion handed down the next morning from Parnassus or vicinity. About the play, I mean; not about the acting. As to the acting all men agreed that it was superbly beautiful and convincing. "As a writer of poetic drama," declared one of the critics, "Mr. Mackaye is hardly impressive. The inspired spark glows very faintly in 'Jeanne d'Arc.' There are passages that are marked with elevation and poetic thought, but they are not frequent." At the same time another molder of the public thought was writing for his journal that "Jeanne d'Arc" was "a drama wherein tragic, historical facts and fictional supplement of lofty invention are indeed skillfully interwoven with a wealth of detail both of sentiment and comedy to lighten the inevitable gravity of the woof of the plot." The *New York Herald* in its telegraphed review of the piece said: "The dramatist has taken the ordinary historical tradition of the Maid of Orleans and given it a dress of great poetic beauty. But, while an effort has been made to bestow on the work literary value, this quality is not made of such a kind that the work loses in the least degree in acting force. There is a naturalness and strength in the dialogue not at all weakened but rather heightened by the well-chosen, forceful language in which it is set forth." And the *Globe* said: "Appreciation in spectacle form of the poignant beauty, the piteous tragedy, the unstained nobility of the tale of the Maid of Orleans has been

reserved to an American. That compatriot is Percy Mackaye."

Miss Marlowe liked the play and the part. Years afterward she was still resentful of any unfair criticism of the playwright. As to *Jeanne*, what most appealed to her was the chance it offered to work upon one of those psychological intricacies in which she delighted. She saw in it mysticism and inspiration as the result of a conviction of a supernatural message, and she saw a woman that was human and still not of the earth earthy; a woman with underlying character-strengths to be revealed and developed. Feeling this deeply, *Jeanne* was that night and so long as she played it one of her great rôles. It was noted that she suggested throughout a noble spirituality combined with an inflexible purpose, high courage, and an inevitable sympathy, and made of these elements a strangely vital and fascinating human being.

"*Jeanne d'Arc*" filled out the week to Philadelphia's great satisfaction. The intention had been to give on the Monday night of the next week the first performance of "John the Baptist," but H. B. Irving was to open that night in Philadelphia in a new play and it seemed to Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe an act of graceful courtesy to postpone their own premier to give him a chance. "*Jeanne d'Arc*," therefore, was continued another week and ran throughout to crowded houses.

The first performance of the Sudermann play was on the night of Tuesday, October 30, 1906, and drew

another great audience of the thoughtful. It may be remembered that when Sudermann first attempted to bring out this play in Berlin the censor prohibited it, perhaps on the ground that it was on a Biblical subject. Then the kaiser interfered in its behalf and it ran four years in German theaters. We need not conceal the fact that it was never popular in America. One correspondent telegraphing to New York that night said that the audience "seemed more amazed than stirred and the performance proceeded in an intense silence." Miss Marlowe played *Salome*, a part written upon lines new and all foreign to those she had been seen in. The story is something like that in the Bible. *John*, played by Mr. Sothern, is preaching in the wilderness when the news is passed about that *Herod* with *Herodias*, his harlot wife, is about to profane the holy temple by entering it. To prevent this sacrilege, *John* puts forth his influence. The public was much interested in the Dance of the Seven Veils, which Miss Marlowe spiritedly performed, and—saving her reverence—never should have performed at all. Opinions differed as to the merit of the play, if it had any; also as to whether it was any tolerable vehicle for Julia Marlowe. Not, I may say, among those whose view of it I humbly shared. The only important thing, I suppose, was how the public viewed it, and the public showed that for a short time, at least, it would come to see "John the Baptist," and to some extent it would applaud in it the new showing of Julia Marlowe's facile and many-sided art.



"The Sunken Bell" was produced in Washington on November 15, and, in spite of its mysticism, was received with approval. The *Washington Times*, reviewing this first performance gave to Mr. Sothern the greatest praise. "It may be," said its critic, "that he had done something better than his impersonation of *Heinrich*, the master bell founder, but a memory extending over the majority of his characters from his *Lord Chumley* and *Jack Hamerton* down to his *Duc d'Alençon* in 'Jeanne d'Arc' fails to recall it. He plays the idealist thoughtfully and intelligently, of course, but he does more; he plays it as only an idealist could. He plays it with a fire and enthusiasm that approach closely to genius."

Miss Marlowe's *Rautendelein* was viewed as "all grace, all poetry, all enchantment, but not quite *Rautendelein* because it was too sympathetically spiritual and not elfish enough."

The press of Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago liked "The Sunken Bell" as it was successively presented in those cities, and was tolerant about "John the Baptist," but both left the public cold.

In Boston they left it congealed. The Sudermann play came first and fared worst. Some of the critics viewed it with respect, but the majority found it poor stuff and tiresome. The *Traveler* praised the high intent and the excellent art of the production, but found it "ponderous and heavy for the most part." It added that "with the exception of some of Miss Marlowe's scenes, in





*Photograph by Arnold Genthe*

*Ophelia*—THE "ROSE OF MAY"  
("Hamlet")



which she makes *Salome* a brilliant, fascinating and cruel creature, most of the play is carried on by long and thickly whiskered citizens who lament over the sad state of affairs in Israel."

"From the standards of historical truthfulness, realism, atmosphere, correctness of portrayal, dignity, artistry and fine setting, the production could not be improved," said the *American*. But, it added that "one gets tired waiting for something to happen," and it described the restlessness of the audience as an indication of its lack of interest in what was going on before it. But the writer concluded his critique by saying that "the reverent treatment given to every minute particular, the rich impressiveness and the completeness and beauty of it all" were worth "the rather weary waiting."

A little of this seemed likely to satiate Boston taste and, on January 6, "Jeanne d'Arc" was substituted and received with great acclaim, play and players being liked equally. "The Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet" were played in this engagement and the thoughtful Boston critics were interested to note the changes that Mr. Sothern had made in his *Shylock* and Miss Marlowe in her *Portia* in a year's absence.

Then they went to New York and opened at the Lyric Theatre in "John the Baptist." The house was filled to its utmost capacity, but nobody liked the play. The *Sun* said it was not a play at all; it was a dramatic portrait, or rather, two dramatic portraits. It thought that Mr. Sothern was picturesque,

impassioned and austere powerful and that his picture of the martyred *John* was deeply impressive. The things it said about Miss Marlowe's *Salome*, though words of praise, may be taken to express the objections of those friends that thought (and still think) she never should have undertaken such a part. It required her, said the *Sun*, to portray a "sophistication that is inborn" and "a girlishness that is mere simulation," and might have added that nothing could have been farther from the actress's natural bent or the ideal of herself she had created in the mind of the public. I thought the play was dreary rubbish, all unworthy of the conception of her art she had followed so long and nobly. As she wholly disagreed with me on this point, I must set forth her views as probably correct. She held that the art of the drawing amounted to its justification; that to show the varying emotions of *Salome* and show them with artistic perfection was an achievement in art, pure and unobjectionable, and she was always a little sensitive to the criticisms of her friends that thought the part beneath her, feeling that these did not understand the objects she sought. I suppose the issue is between the strictly artistic conception and the personal.

The *Sun* thought that as portraiture her work was powerfully done, the climax being reached "when the soul of the prophet, which had been moved to pity by her youth and loveliness, turned coldly away from her proffered lust," and "she rose to the fury of a woman scorned with all the fire of

hardened rage and none of the abasement of girlish shame."

Here, as elsewhere, it appeared that to see the famous Dance of the Seven Veils was the desire that bore many spectators through the aridities of unconvincing scenes and the dismal monotony of pointless lines. One writer thought the artistic qualities of the dance were unquestionable and called it "a triumph such as is seldom witnessed. Plastically, it had moments of inexpertness, though pre- vailingly graceful and compelling to the senses. Dramatically, it was supreme. As she threw off veil after veil, the crisis in her soul was increasingly felt in every step of the dance, timorous yet resolute, impassioned yet calculatingly cold, until she sank in a huddle upon the floor, spent with the shameless effort, yet triumphant in the quest of power over the man she loved."

Rather oddly, none of the critics called attention to the fact that the sensualism to which they objected was still more prominent in the original. The conscientious actors that, for a purely artistic reason, had produced this play had shorn from it matter certain to be still more objectionable to these captious ones.

"The Sunken Bell" followed two weeks later. To make clear the symbolism, the following exegesis was printed on the programs:

"*Heinrich*, the bell founder, typifies Human Aspiration, striving for the liberation of the soul from

Formalism at its Best and Worst; *Magda*, his wife, typifies Formalism at its Best, striving against him; *Rautendelein* typifies Freedom of the Soul, appearing to Him as a vision and lending Him Strength for His Conflict; *Nickelmann*, the water-sprite, typifies Ancient Skepticism, warring against Him by Recurring Attempts to take Her from Him," and so on. It is remarkable that upon this effort to make clear the inscrutable the critics fell with concurrent heartiness. Some said it should never have been appended, some said it spoiled the effect of the allegory, and some ridiculed the type in which it was set.

By and large, New York did not care much for "The Sunken Bell," but it lasted out its specified week to fair houses. "Jeanne d'Arc" had a much better reception; Miss Marlowe had done nothing aside from Shakespeare that won so much warm praise from the thoughtful as her *Jeanne*. There came next revivals of old successes, notably "Romeo and Juliet," and "The Merchant of Venice," a short tour of the country, and on March 29, 1907, the entire company sailed for England on the steamship *America*.



## CHAPTER XXI

### PLAYING IN ENGLAND



T was an adventure in hardihood, and no one knew better than Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern that it was no less. American actors in serious plays have a record of failure in England not to be equaled in all dramatic annals. Whether this is because of the notion prevalent in England that the United States is a British colony, whether it is mere insular psychology, or some manifestation of what Stevenson once ridiculed as "British self-sufficiency and taste," I know not; but there is the plain blunt record. Whereas British opinion expects America to receive with rapture whatever theatrical offering from British shores the lowly Americans may be favored with, there is no shadow of reciprocity in these relations. Mr. Booth went to London and played to empty seats and the utter scorn of the critics. There still persists in London eloquent though all unpublished tribute to the surpassing beauty of his *Hamlet*, but in public no one would have a gift of it. John McCullough scored a memorable disaster, Lawrence Barrett was laughed at and condemned, London would have none of Richard Mansfield, calling him a "bogy-man," and even

the tender and moving picture of *Caleb Plummer* as portrayed by Joseph Jefferson was to London only a sign of contempt.

Yet Miss Marlowe was determined to play in London and stand the consequences, whatever they might be. Naturally, being of English birth, she desired to play at least once in the land of her nativity; and next, it seemed to her that the verdict upon her art would not be all in until another country had passed upon it. In the way of financial reward neither she nor Mr. Sothern entertained delusions. They expected only loss and prepared themselves for it. They formed a kind of self-insurance fund to provide the expenses of the venture and were ready to lose it all. Nor were they less informed as to the other difficulties insularity might have in store, but admitted all, having still faith in the honesty of their purpose to win past these to a recognition awaiting them.

The outset was not auspicious. Advance press work had been done for them, but much of it, because of inexperience in the peculiar English field, injudiciously ordered. The agent, indeed, was careful and zealous to throw forward the fact that Miss Marlowe had been born in England and that Mr. Sothern was of English parentage and education, which was wise. But he made statements about the American successes of the stars and about their plans for the future that seemed to the British press writers extravagant. This sharpened in every way the ever-ready hostility. When he went to the

length of hiring sandwich men to parade the streets with signs beginning in huge red type, "Hands Across the Sea!" and urging London's support of the visitors for the sake of an overworked sentimentality, deliberate judgment was offended.

To this ill situation came other troubles with outstretched hands. The theater chosen for the engagement was not happily selected. It was out of the way, never associated in the London mind with the serious and standard drama and for two years had been closed. "The Sunken Bell" was the opening play, and proved at once to have been badly picked, although after much thought and on what seemed sound enough reasoning. The general belief in the theatrical world was that the uniform failure of the American players in England was due to resentment against outsiders or yokels from the colonies that assumed to play Shakespeare in a country rich in traditions of Kean, Kemble, and Macready and lately blessed with the visible presence of Henry Irving. Much better, then, it was argued, to start with something else and show Shakespeare after a serious success had proved worth and capacity. This reasoning left "The Sunken Bell" as the only possibility, for "Jeanne d'Arc," being by an American writer would be sure to be condemned and "John the Baptist" the royal censor would not allow to be played in England. Another consideration clinched this argument. "The Sunken Bell" had not been popular in America, and this fact was naturally ascribed to the volatility of the American mind.

The English people, being of a staid and thoughtful disposition would certainly welcome a piece of this character, the more so as it had never been done before them. No one could have suspected that its reception in England would prove far worse than anything said about it in America.

April 22, 1907, was the opening night. To the agreeable surprise of everybody concerned, the audience was of considerable size. The house was not filled, but it was not empty as it might easily have been. When the London public does not care for a theatrical performance it does not care for it, and there's an end. It seems incredible to American ears, but plays have been acted in London when the total receipts of the house were \$10, \$2.50 and even \$1. Not in ancient times, either; within fifteen years this has happened and more than once. In America in the like conditions the management would return the money and close the house. In London, they have a different idea. Just as in the old part of the city you may find of a Sunday morning in an established church a congregation of three, or two, or nobody, and the services proceeding as usual, so in the theater, the playing having been announced goes through if nobody sees it. The audience that started the new American adventurers that night was not only larger than had been expected, but it was less unfriendly. Although it showed at once that it had small regard for "The Sunken Bell," there was much applause for Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern.

Next day a pleasant time was had by all the London newspapers.

To reread them now is to offer to the curious and the meditative a delightful study in the philosophy of internationalism—also much rare, if quite unintended, humor. Every writer is careful to begin his remarks by reminding his readers that these actors are at least of English extraction and, assumably, therefore, entitled to mercy. Before one has finished the onslaughts one is marveling what would have happened to them but for the grace of this saving fact. Next they all lament that the visitors elected to appear in such a play. Next they denounce the accursed play—bell, book and candle, and the rest. Next they have a paragraph about the playing, the indubitable impression being conveyed that this was fairly bad; too bad, indeed, to dwell upon; let us draw the charitable veil and that kind of thing. Some, however, rejoice, that bad as it was, the detested Yankee peculiarities of utterance were not imposed upon the audience—or not intolerably, anyway. "Not once throughout the whole evening," remarked the *Chronicle* in a burst of near enthusiasm, "did one hear in a principal part a trace of Yankee twang or drawl or vulgarity of speech. As a matter of fact, the verse was spoken with a precision, a roundness, and a crispness that would put many English actors to shame."

"We are glad to welcome Mr. E. H. Sothorn and Miss Julia Marlowe to their native shores," began the *Daily Mail's* review, and then proceeded



to manifest the spirit of welcome by handing the beloved visitors a series of backhanded wallops. "Uninspired Acting" the headline called their efforts. "We hope they will enjoy their little trip and make a great many friends. But they should not have opened their season at the Waldorf Theater last night with a cold-blooded massacre of Hauptmann's lovely poem, 'The Sunken Bell.' English audiences do not take kindly to such acts of vandalism.

"Whether Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe understand 'The Sunken Bell,' we do not pretend to decide. This much it is our duty to place on record, however thankless the task: at no moment during the evening did they succeed in interpreting the play to the audience. Those without previous acquaintance of the work must have been bored to death; indeed, the many empty seats at the conclusion of the Fourth Act proved that the spirit of boredom was abroad. As to the others, those who knew and loved the poem, their torture was the more severe."

Of Mr. Sothern this amiable writer then proceeded to speak in the temperate and restrained manner in which one might speak of some form of public malefactor. Miss Marlowe, he said, "had not been on the stage ten minutes before one realized that her share of the performance must be a failure. The part of *Rautendelein* is one of the daintiest, loveliest things in the dramatic catalogue. Surely Miss Marlowe must realize that she was not intended by nature to play the fairy! Her speaking



voice is pleasant enough, but it lacks variety, modulation, flexibility. *Rautendelein* rippled on her way. Miss Marlowe is a blend—and we say it with all respect to two artists of undoubted eminence in their own lines—of Mrs. Brown Potter and Miss Connie Ediss. The scenery was pretty. The music by Aimé Lauchaume was equally pretty. The rest is silence.”

In another journal of the day, now defunct, an eminent authority said that for Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothorn to begin their engagement in such a play was daring and showed great confidence in “the imagination of the poetic temperament of the London public.” He praised the patience of the audience for allowing to the play so good a hearing, there being only “some restlessness in certain parts of the house after the second of the five acts and a tendency among a few to laugh discourteously in the wrong place.”

These are fair samples of a chorus that ranged from disparagement to invective. The critics, hammer in hand, went out for a day’s sport, and had it. One of them, an oracle much revered among his fellows of the chase, decided that the choice of the play was “a pity,” because it was “so essentially German,” which he seemed to think ought to be enough. Would you more, it is at hand. The play was “so long-winded, so pragmatical, and, at times, so strangely prosaic that it really does not commend itself to the English imagination. Say what you will,” proceeds this judicious person, “there are

racial differences in outlook and mental make-up, and only a very great genius solves these difficulties. I do not think Hauptmann is that kind of a dramatic genius."

Just before the end of these meditations he seems to have thought suddenly that there was some question of acting to be considered. Oh, yes—the acting! Well, as to that, "Mr. Sothern appears to be an actor of many gifts, but he certainly did not succeed in triumphing over his difficulties. His best moment was when *Heinrich* upholds his new ideals against the protests of the worldly-wise and kindly vicar. In the main, Mr. Sothern did not convey a suggestion of inner force or of any great personal magnetism. Nor was Miss Marlowe at all remarkable as *Rautendelein*, the elfin creature who kisses *Heinrich* into his new life."

Another authority of the daily press regarded the play as a "curious, fantastical allegory, not too easy to understand," and said that "the rhymed couplets into which it had been rendered have a very decided tendency to rob the original of the poetry which it undoubtedly contains, and obscure the ideas. So much is this the case that at moments one is tempted to say irreverently, 'Thus bad begins and verse remains behind.' " This was a first-class jest, but, inasmuch as the original had not been rendered into rhymed couplets, the point might be deemed somewhat questionable. As to the acting by the principals he declined to express any opinion, but he pointed out that Mr. Buckstone of the support was



*Photograph by Strauss-Peyton*

THE LATER *Juliet*



an admirable actor, having been born in England and being still an English subject.

The *Times* was less considerate. After describing with lumbering merriment the character of the piece, it added: "We cannot say that they [meaning Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern] give these figures a fresh and exuberant life. Miss Marlowe is not exactly a frisky fairy; Mr. Sothern's *Heinrich* is occasionally tame. A tame overman! What would Nietzsche say? And they are both a little too monotonous in their delivery. For a bell-founder, this *Heinrich* seems curiously lacking in an ear for variety of tone. Fairies surely have more notes in their voice than seem within the compass of Miss Marlowe."

Contrariwise, one may note that this off-hand judgment about the visitors' voices was not shared by all the writers. One remarked on Mr. Sothern that "without seeming either physically or otherwise a very impressive actor, he is evidently a very intelligent one, well equipped technically and with an admirable, clear enunciation. These valuable qualities are shared by Miss Marlowe, who has a most musical voice and much sympathetic grace of poetic expression, though she bears too much weight of personality and manner to realize very happily the airy sprightliness of a *Rautendelein*."

Not gracious, but fairly convincing.

I will give one more of these specimens that a somewhat gloomy theme may be enlivened with a touch of the blithesome. After he had sufficiently

battered up the play, one member of the Hammerfest Union wrote:

International courtesy would lead one to attribute the undoubted dulness of last night's performance to the players, if they were English. But the players were American, and the well-mannered critic is in a quandary. But shall this balk him? Not in the least. The way out is easily found to a critic of any spirit, as thus: Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern have, indeed, come to England with so great a reputation that it is preferable to reserve criticism until they have been seen in a more understandable play.

At that date weekly newspapers and reviews were still a feature of London life. As a rule they were less truculent than the dailies in their attitude toward the visitors. One was even genial. It thought that "Miss Marlowe's attempts to bewitch the audience as she bewitches *Heinrich* signally fail and that Mr. Sothern, for all his gifts, also fails to save us from *ennui*." But it acknowledged with candor the marvelous qualities of Miss Marlowe's voice and method.

The floral tributes that first night were extraordinary for number and beauty and aroused much ridicule as a trick of the American press-agent. They were, however, in every instance, spontaneous expressions of good-will. Sarah Bernhardt sent one, Richard Mansfield another. President Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie, Chauncey M. Depew, J. P. Morgan, Gabriel d'Annunzio, Richard Watson Gilder, William Winter, Mayor McClellan, President



Eliot of Harvard, Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, and Hauptmann himself were other contributors. The London press made much of the quality of the audience, which, besides various persons that carried titles, included J. M. Barrie, Anthony Hope, Laurence Irving and John Hare.

One more performance of "The Sunken Bell" was given on the next night to a slender and spiritless audience and then the play was shelved. On Wednesday, April 24th, "Jeanne d'Arc" was substituted and met with a better reception. The newspapers did not like the play and hopped with enthusiasm upon poor Mr. Mackaye for thinking that an American could handle such a subject. The *Morning Post* said that its diction wavered "between the formally rhetorical and chattily commonplace," and as examples of its banalities cited the lines that follow, though why they should shake with horror the souls of all Right Minded Persons it did not explain:

Out there—beyond, in the wide land, beyond!  
And there were thousands flashing in the sun  
Beneath dark walls and mighty battlements,  
And all their shining limbs were stiff with steel;  
And rank by rank they rattled as they marched,  
But each half hid his neighbor in his shield  
Like soldiers in the chapel window glass.

It seemed to think the supernatural element in "Joan's career was absurdly overemphasized and by devices of questionable merit." It gave a column

and a half to a rather unpleasant summary of the play and then said of the actors :

Where, however, the dramatic element predominates over the spectacular, as in the Second Act with its interesting triumph for the heroine over trickery, Miss Marlowe and her colleagues proved able to make the very best of the material placed in their hands. The actress, improving greatly upon her work in "The Sunken Bell," bore herself most naturally as the inspired Shepherdess, and quite carried conviction in the girl's own belief that her mission was divine. Her voice is not full enough or rich enough in variety to bear forcing as she forces it in the hysteria induced in the battlefield by the physical pain of her wound. But she gave genuine pathos to *Jeanne's* anguish in her prison, and she posed with touching simplicity as the martyr waiting her doom.

No more but so.

The *Daily Mail* called the play melodrama and, while slightly mollified about Miss Marlowe, refused to be converted to a belief in her or in Mr. Sothern. She was "far happier in this sort of thing than in 'The Sunken Bell,' however. Her personality is not arresting, and the wailing drawl in which she delivers her lines becomes very monotonous. But she is a useful worker. There is a softness, a femininity about her which, although at variance with preconceived notions of *Jeanne d'Arc*, appeals to one's sentiments. It seemed quite a shame that she should be compelled to march about in heavy armor, and it was not at all kind of the herald to address

her as an 'unvirgin thing.' For ourselves, we were in sympathy with the hero, who exhorted her to 'be a good girl.'

"Mr. Sothern gets through the evening with very little trouble. His *Duc d'Alençon* was very similar to his *Heinrich*. Both are well-mannered gentlemen, and know better than to get hot and uncomfortable, when, after all, it is only play-acting. He wore some rather loud armor in the Fourth Act, by the way, but that was a concession, no doubt, to a fashion of the moment."

The play was hunted to and fro without mercy. One of the journals devoted to it and its alleged sins more than a column and to the acting what the printers call a stick, which is about two inches. It seemed to find the acting deplorable. Yet on the heels of this another saw merit in the performance, and was good enough to equal Marlowe almost to Mrs. Patrick Campbell—a Britannic concession at which all Marloweites groaned and shook their heads. "Without being quite an inspired player," it added, "Miss Marlowe is evidently an actress of quite unusual interest and ability."

But the *Standard* made a complete surrender, and uttered the first word of unreserved and unpoisoned praise that had been said in London of these efforts:

Miss Julia Marlowe won last night all along the line. Her performance of *Joan of Arc* swept her audience with her and never for one moment did she lose her hold upon them. Every moment of the play during which she was on the stage, had an interest and an appeal. The spirituality,

the vigor, and the variety of the actress endowed each scene of the stirring and strenuous play with charm, intensity, or a glamour that came from a winning and magnetic personality. Miss Marlowe dominated the scene and by sheer force of individuality and a method vigorous and highly trained lifted the piece out of itself and made it seem something better than it was. Her raptness . . . carried absolute conviction. Each new part in her repertoire will now be watched with increasing interest.

One of the converts related at the mourner's bench an interesting personal experience. "In dealing with the *Jeanne* of Miss Julia Marlowe," he wrote, "we feel conscious of a difficulty. Again and again last night she gave us that rare sensation, the cold wave over the cheek. There is a certain note in her voice, sounded at moments of intense passion, which never failed to reach our emotional center; and as it was touched at least half a dozen times, in each of the first three acts, we spent a somewhat exhausting evening. Another hour of it indeed, and these presents might never have been written. A good many others present evidently suffered in the same way, for the cheering at the end of the first three acts was altogether beyond the ordinary. In the quieter scenes of the rest of the play, we found the actress always interesting, for she was always thinking, but our emotions were under satisfactory control."

One of the faults found with the play was that its author had dared, in the words of one of the critics, "to drag a love interest into the piece," from which

it seemed that the real error must lie in the traverse of a statute restricting such interest to Schiller and others that have dealt with this theme. He wound up his slashing review with seven lines about the acting. "The one redeeming feature," he said, "is the performance of Miss Marlowe, whose *Joan* is tender, simple, and childlike as *Joan* ought to be. She accomplishes something really fine in presenting a picture of what one must call saintliness, of the utter absorption and quiet power of faith. Amid the general mediocrity and occasional absurdity of the play this figure stands out serene, beautiful, not to be forgotten."

The royal play censor having made an edict against "John the Baptist," the next play was "Twelfth Night," and Miss Marlowe's *Viola* was recognized at once as a marvelously artistic and moving creation. The *Times*, which had not been impressed by "The Sunken Bell" nor by "Jeanne d'Arc" was wholly captured now. "Miss Marlowe is a bewitching *Viola*," this critic began. "This is her first Shakespearean adventure in London and it would, of course, be premature, upon a single trial, to declare her a Shakespearean actress. But this much is already certain—that, in the purely sensuous element of Shakespeare, in the poet's picture of frankly joyous and full-blooded womanhood, the actress is in her element, mistress of her part, reveling in it, and swaying the audience by an irresistible charm. . . . That is now clearly shown which in her earlier parts could be only divined, that

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Rolls  
contain an  
action  
contain  
orig.

① Portia rise

② Bassanio to Portia

③ X Portia cross up hof c followed  
by Bassanio's ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~criss~~ followed by  
 Gratiano to R c Antonio c

④ X Bassanio fronts her. she sits at R.

⑤ X Portia cross up R back of portia.  
down L.

⑥ X Portia to bench R. sits.

⑦ X Bassanio to L of Portia

(Antonio  
quizes - growing serious)

~~Bassanio kneels~~

\* I wash basal with shame and courtesy.  
My Honor would not let in gratitude  
So much besmeared. Pardon my goodness  
X kneels

Var. p 263



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That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;  
And neither man, nor master, would take aught  
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?  
Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me.

Bass. I could add a lie unto a fault;  
I would deny it; but you see, my finger  
Hath not the ring upon it, it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.  
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your sight  
Until I see the ring.

Ner. Nor I in yours,

Till I again see mine.

Bass.

Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the ring,

And would conceive for what I gave the ring,

And how unwillingly I left the ring,

When nought would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Bass. If you had known the virtue of the ring,

Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honour to redeem the ring,

You would not then have parted with the ring.

What man is there so much unreasonable,

If you had pleas'd to have defended it

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe; if

I'll die for't, but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,

No woman had it, but a civil doctor.

Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me.

And begg'd the ring, the which I did deny him,

And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;

Even he that had held up the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet

lady?

I was enforc'd to send it after him;

For, by these blessed candles of the night,

Had you been there, I think, you would have begg'd

The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:

Since he hath got the jewel that I lov'd,

And that which you did swear to keep for me,

turns  
obligate  
he

Carne  
X 3

Portia rises  
contains not  
retain  
She back R  
down Lope

Portia to C  
= "  
moves

Insert for  
orig. text

Rolte-  
orig. "bel"

to L. H. to Lope

up

Down

to R

Advancing to 1

Portia

Bassanio's

surveys

half made

R. C. under

to R then

back above

to L of base

Bassanio's

knels here

Antonio Lope

she has a genuine individuality, a temperament of real force and peculiar charm. High arched brows over wide open, eloquent eyes; a most expressive mouth, now roguish with mischief, now trembling with passion; a voice with a strange croon in it, with sudden breaks and sobs—these, of course, are purely physical qualities which an actress might have and yet not greatly move us. But, behind these things in Miss Marlowe, there is evidently an alert intelligence, a rare sense of humor, and a nervous energy which make with her external qualities a combination really fine. No wonder that *Olivia* is fascinated by this youth! She beguiled not only *Olivia* but the whole house last night to admiration. Here, then, is one of Shakespeare's true women. Whether she can be this or that other Shakespearean woman remains to be seen. But *Viola* she is, a delicious *Viola*, who sets the heart beating, and the warm blood coursing through the veins.

"Mr. Sothern, too, makes his mark for the first time. He is an excellent *Malvolio*; quiet yet not tame, grave but not preternaturally grave, fantastic without undue extravagance."

The *Express* in six lines of type called it a lovely *Viola*, praised the *Malvolio* of Mr. Sothern and dropped the subject. Sir Sauerman Grouch, Bart., who was said to have written the criticisms for the *Daily Mail*, gave even less, but admitted that the performance was much more satisfactory than either of the others the company had given and that Miss Marlowe's *Viola* "had a great deal of merit."

Yet the hunt was over. Critics that had dispraised her other work had to admit the charm of this *Viola*. They might do it reluctantly and even acridly, but they did it. "There were evidently brains in her work," said one, "and there was sympathy in her every utterance, even though in her well-balanced elocution she may have missed the full vocal music of the lines, which she spoke with much intelligent appreciation. Her only mistake was her tendency to overdo her outbursts of distress."

When he had enumerated all possible faults in the work, the *Telegraph* man was forced to admit that it was "a cleverly rendered piece of characterization," and ended with this admission, the more convincing because it was so grudgingly done :

The general idea of character, however, was undoubtedly rightly and most skilfully conceived, and, as the play progressed, the *Viola* of last night gradually won her way—as indeed she ought to do—into our hearts. Miss Marlowe is above all an actress who should be seen not once but many times. She does not conquer at once; but as the spectator watches her he becomes aware that his critical armor is valueless. And we do not know what greater tribute can be given to an artist.

The last that came into camp did not hang back like this. "*Viola* is Miss Julia Marlowe," he wrote. "Miss Marlowe is *Viola*, all woman. There is danger of us becoming Marlowe worshipers if she goes on like this. Her voice, her raptness, are quite wonderful. It is open to criticism to say there is

premeditation in all that she does; one would not urge that the outstanding feature of her art is that it is art concealed. That may be admitted. But while one watches her and listens to her one would have it so. Miss Marlowe adds music to the music of Shakespeare, cadence to his rhythm. Take it for all in all, her *Viola* is an exquisite performance."

What was it the Philadelphia man wrote after that first great triumph of hers in the former abode of "Terry, the Swell"? "She came, she was seen, she conquered." It was so here. The struggle in London was an epitome of life to her. Hard work, every disadvantage, every obstacle, prejudice, opposition, formula—and coming successfully from them all.

After "Twelfth Night" at the gloomy Waldorf came "Romeo and Juliet," which was, on the whole, well received and then "Hamlet" wherein Mr. Sothern made an excellent impression. These performances were notable for winning to the American actors' whole-hearted and eloquent support the pen of Arthur Symons, one of the most capable critics and gifted men of England. He felt so surely the poetic beauty of this *Juliet* and this *Ophelia* that he wrote in the *Review*, a monthly magazine of the highest character, a deliberate analysis that ran to twelve pages of type and expressed without reservation the verdict about Miss Marlowe's art that had long been held by all Shakespeareans in America and all persons of poetical insight. Mr. Symons's remarkable article will be found in full in the ap-

pendices to this volume. In this place I merely mention that he declared without hesitation that Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe had by the artistic merit of their work read to England the lesson the English public most needed. "This astonishing thing occurred," he wrote, "that a play was presented for its own sake, with reverence, not with ostentation; for Shakespeare's sake, not for the actor-manager's." As exactly this and nothing else had been the life-long ambition and controlling thought of both of these players, the sudden and complete perception of the fact from such a source went home with a rare gratification. They had always felt that this was so, but they had not found in all England such a candid statement of their aims.

"The mission of these two guests," he went on, "has been to show us what we have lost on our stage and what we have forgotten in our Shakespeare." And he proceeded to draw—the rarely inspired man!—the parallels between Shakespeare and the great composers of music, and to find in the performances of these two Americans a recognition of Shakespeare's musical values, perfect and unalloyed.

Miss Marlowe's *Juliet* was a revelation of Shakespeare himself that had not before occurred to Mr. Symons.

I thought there was rhetoric in the play, as well as the natural poetry of drama. But I see that it only needs to be acted with genius and intelligence, and the poetry consumes the rhetoric. I never knew before that this play was so near to life, or that every beauty in it could be made so inevitably

human. And this is because no one else has rendered with so deep a truth, with so beautiful a fidelity, all that is passionate and desperate and an ecstatic agony in this tragic love that glorifies and destroys *Juliet*.

Of Mr. Sothern's *Hamlet*, he said: "But at last I have seen the man himself, as Shakespeare saw him living, a gentleman as well as a philosopher, a nature of fundamental sincerity; no melancholy clown, but the greatest of all critics of life. And the play, with its melodrama and its lyrical ecstasy, moved before one's eyes like a religious service."

"Romeo and Juliet" was the first of these performances he saw and it deeply moved him, so deeply that when, after it was over, he sought the managers to express his gratitude, the tears were still wet on his cheek and he could not well command his voice.

The press in general, if it could not bring to the performance the same power of analysis, the same perception of art principles, or a like readiness to suppress nationalistic promptings, was at least aware of a great *Juliet* and a great *Hamlet*.

Nevertheless, the public did not respond to nor share the tardy surrender of the newspapers. It still remained aloof and the attendance was never as large as any enterprise receiving such endorsement had a right to expect. The fundamental reason was discovered by a member of the company that stationed himself at the door of the theater and noted the comments of the people as they stopped



to read the billboards. These were of the order of contemptuous amusement that Americans should think they could play Shakespeare. To bring up the average of the door receipts, "When Knighthood was in Flower," which had been in America so great a money-maker, was put on toward the end of the six weeks' engagement and was the cause of an illuminating incident. The time of the play, as before noted, is the reign of King Henry the Eighth. This eccentric monarch had died three hundred and sixty years before, and might, therefore, be believed to be to the British public no more an object of reverence or tender regard than Nebuchadnezzar; but he that thought so erred grievously. On that first night when the line was reached,

The king! the king! God bless my soul, is he the only man in England?

the audience was stirred by some strange moving of the spirit of chauvin and broke into loud boos, so that at the subsequent performances this line had to be omitted.

Yet the artistic success of the adventure, as a whole, was veritable; and even so far as money returns go, the results were better than the players had expected. Mr. Sothern made public the facts before the company sailed homeward. On the last night, Mr. Beerbohm Tree gave to the visitors a farewell supper on the roof of his theater. The literary, artistic and intellectual world of London

was there, or represented. Tree made a speech in which he dwelt in an interesting way on the generous reception he had had in America and avoided comparisons that might have wounded the visitors. Mr. Sothern, in responding, said with admirable candor that Miss Marlowe and he had expected to lose \$40,000 in their venture and so far had the response of the London public gone beyond their forecast that the actual loss would be but \$15,000. With many expressions of their own good-will, the stars bade England farewell and sailed homeward on the *Mauretania*.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM



HE London correspondents of the American newspapers had been kind to the enterprise, sending over chiefly the words of praise, and omitting the censures. Therefore, the London visit added somewhat to the prestige of the players, although it was one that neither cared to repeat. They arrived in New York early in June and signalized their return with a characteristic gesture. In their previous New York engagements they had played at regular theater prices in the huge old Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street. They now took the house and played Shakespeare in it at prices so low as to bring the best seats within the limits of lean purses. Owners of these and the general public responded with such enthusiasm that the place was every night packed to the doors. When the engagement ended, Miss Marlowe went to Franzenbad, Bohemia, where she spent the summer.

The dual star arrangement with Mr. Sothern expired with this season and it seemed best that, for the next year or two, at least, each should return to separate endeavor. Mr. Sothern revived "If I Were King," the excellent play by Justin McCarthy, in which he had made a great success before his partnership with Miss Marlowe. He also played "Hamlet," brought out a new play written for him by Paul

Kester on "Don Quixote," and another by Laurence Irving founded on Dostievsky's "Crime and Punishment" which Mr. Sothern called "The Fool Hath Said in His Heart." Miss Marlowe ventured in a comedy of the Renaissance called "Gloria," written by J. B. Fagan. It was of somewhat light texture but served as other plays had served, to add new elements to her clientèle. She also gave revivals of "Romeo and Juliet," and "As You Like it," with Frederick Lewis and White Whittlesey as leading men. This was a prosperous season.

Some critics were not kind to "Gloria"; some seemed on principle to resent any play for her that was below the Shakespearean standard. Her own loyalty to play and playwright alike was unaffected. To the adverse comment she responded with this letter:

My dear Mr. Fagan:

I enclose the Philadelphia press notices. I shall try "Gloria" in Washington and hope later to try it in New York. The play is superbly mounted, the sets are the best Italian scenes we have ever had on our stage. I assure you the play shall have every opportunity for a fair hearing. We began on Christmas night to a holiday audience. On the second night the business dropped, but this is a very bad and uncertain season and we really can tell nothing until the play has been seen in other cities. My managers are unwilling to pay you royalties over five per cent. All in excess I shall pay you myself, so you see my faith in our play. The Washington notices shall be sent you promptly.

Faithfully yours,

JULIA MARLOWE.

In February of this season, being 1908, she was invited to lecture before the students of Radcliffe College at Cambridge and chose for her topic "The Art of the Theater." In this discourse she developed her views concerning the relations of acting to other arts and to culture and education. "I do not mean," she said, "that all colleges graduates should go on the stage; but rather that all stage aspirants would do well to go to college. . . . I, myself, have never known a successful actor that did not have a rare knowledge and complete appreciation not only of acting but of all the other arts. For example, he must have a knowledge of sculpture, not only of the history of sculpture, but of the technical principles that govern the sculptor himself. In order to look like one of the early Greeks, one must not only know how the sculptures of Phidias and Praxiteles looked, one must know how to make one's self look like that thing that they represented, namely, a perfectly controlled and poised human body as an expression of thought or poetic feeling.

"Then, an actor must know painting, not only what pictures are masterpieces, but why, that he may effectually choose his costumes and scenery and so produce on the stage a beautiful harmony of color.

"He must know history, that he may avoid the mistake of attiring *Lady Macbeth* in the hoop skirts of Marie Antoinette, as did the famous Mrs. Barry; or *Macbeth*, the primitive warrior of the heath, in a flowered brocaded waistcoat and a red velvet coat, with gold lace and buttons, as David Garrick did.

Above all is a knowledge of the fundamentals of literature indispensable."

She passed then to a discussion of "that nameless something" that is usually called temperament, "that ability to disengage one's self, to feel in such a highly sympathetic degree the character one is attempting to portray that it appears to the spectators, though never to one's self, that one really is that character. . . . The aim and end of acting is precisely this—to seem really to be the character one is only assuming." She spoke of the fact that she and other actors in strong emotional parts shed real tears. "Real tears are produced in various ways in the theater; sometimes one is more relaxed than at other times, and the tears come easily. One actor of whom I have heard looked at the calcium, because the strong light brought tears into his eyes. Another carried an onion in his handkerchief; and another, unable to produce any real tears by any device whatever, held in his hand a snuff box, which he had filled with vaseline. When seemingly taking snuff, he put the vaseline on his cheeks, while the audience went into transports over the extreme reality of his emotionalism."

She said that when she was a beginner she believed her *Juliet* to be more effective on the nights when she was moved to weep most profusely, but she found that this was not so, because the spectators had sometimes been so taken up with the real tears of Julia Marlowe they forgot about *Juliet* and the tears she wept.



She said that one actor had been much commended "because when, during a scene in the play his rôle required that he be struck on the cheek with a glove, his face became suffused with blood. This was imagined to be an expression of genius; as a matter of fact, it was nothing but a trick. The actor held his breath. That the audience noticed the actual color of his face at all is, to my mind, not particularly in his favor. By his whole portrayal of his part, and not by any fragmentary mechanical device, he should so have absorbed the spectators that the color of his face became a matter of insignificance. I have often been asked if in 'As You Like It,' when *Orlando's* bloody napkin is shown to *Rosalind*, and, according to the text, she turns pale, I powder my face. I have never done this, partly for the reason that, though I do at that point turn my back to the audience, I do it for so very brief a moment that I have no opportunity to powder my face. But I believe that it is not really necessary. I feel that if, in this scene of the play, I act *Rosalind* skilfully enough, the idea of her pallor will so take its place in the minds of the spectators that they will not concern themselves too much with the actual color of my face."

Scarcely a week passed, she said, in which she did not receive dozens or even hundreds of letters from young people telling her that they wished to act and asking for her advice. Almost invariably they confided to her that they had temperament; seldom did any of them say they were taking

courses in singing, in gymnastics, and, above all, in dramatic literature. "It would interest me much more were they to say they were doing any of these things; not because they are more important than or as important as the possession of temperament, but because it does not often happen that any person is endowed with that rare gift. We have all observed that those persons that say they have a sense of humor never really have it. Its very presence would prevent them from dwelling on it. This holds quite as true of persons that have temperament, likewise a bestowal from the gods."

But a lack of a great gift for acting, she said, does not keep persons that wish to act from going on the stage. Some one must play *Hamlet*, but some one must also play *Bernardo*. She defended the "star" system from common criticism and agreed with Dr. Rolfe that Shakespeare wrote parts that only stars can play. "He also wrote parts that stars cannot play," she added. "Once, in New York in a benefit performance of 'Hamlet' given for a famous actor, a number of well-known stars offered to appear as the ladies and gentlemen of the court of Denmark. They did so appear to the actual injury of the performance. So pronounced were their personalities and so accustomed were they to allow their personalities to be felt that they were unable to subordinate themselves sufficiently to act the parts of members of an abeyant group. In spite of themselves, they took the attention of the audience from what was happening at the court of Denmark and

fastened thought upon the retinue of the court, who were watching it happen."

She pointed out that the relative eminence of "stars" in a play was the same as the relative eminence of the men and women off the stage that do great things. She dissented from Mr. Howells's dictum that he had rather see amateur than professional acting because the amateur was free from the background of stress and strain that made professional performances professional. She asked if the university professors that endorsed this view preferred amateur to professional literature, a song by a member of a college glee club to one of the immortal poems of Keats or Shelley. She concluded with some comments that gave a curious glimpse of her own psychology in its contemplative side:

No art is more exacting than dramatic art. There is no life harder than that of the actor. Whatever, in the course of his career, his reward may be, it is still smaller than the price he pays for it. And not only must he devote all his time to his work; he must do this under conditions the most difficult and distressing. For nine months of the year he is obliged to be away from his home and his friends, and to live on railroad-trains and in hotels. For the most part, he cannot choose his associates. He must study and rehearse and act with persons that may or may not be congenial. He is, as it were, living in a family not his own and very often not even like his own. From this necessary condition proceed many evils—the very greatest of which is, perhaps, loneliness.

Moreover, only the reaching of the very highest point in the theater can make the many steps in the direction of that point endurable. It is an ill thing to be a mediocre author, or a mediocre painter; but nothing is quite so bad as being a mediocre actor. To invest one's youth, and one's hopes, and one's enthusiasm, and then to gain anything but the whole prize—this in the theater is a tragic fate. How many young persons there are that go upon the stage, and spend their youth and their hope and their enthusiasm, only to find that, after all, a stage career is not for them. There is then no place for them in the theater; and, because the training they have received in the theaters prepares them for nothing but the theater, there is no place for them anywhere else in the world of endeavor. It is too late to make a new beginning.

But, for those in her audience that were resolved upon a career in this art, she gave counsel to let nothing discourage them but to work without ceasing and with spirit and high endeavor, and quoted that passage from Kipling, beginning, "Go to your work and be strong."

For the next season, that of 1908-1909, she had prepared a novelty in the shape of a new metrical play by Mary Johnston called "The Goddess of Reason." The theme, of course, was suggested by the French Revolution and it would be flattery to say that Miss Johnston's conception of this historic disturbance was reactionary. Rather, in fact, it seemed troglodytish. The heroine of the story is one *Yvette*, a peasant girl, illegitimate daughter of the local lord. She falls in love with a baron. When the Revolution comes on she is a republican and some-

thing of a leader. In Nantes she is made the goddess of reason in the revolutionary demonstrations. She thinks that her baron is about to marry a woman of the aristocracy. In jealous rage she denounces both and both are condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal. Then she learns that the baron has not planned to marry anybody. As she cannot then save him, she determines to die with him. She denounces herself and is thrown with him into the Loire. All the incidents, without regard to historical accuracy or just perspective, portrayed the Revolution and everybody connected with it in the worst possible light, but the character of *Yvette* afforded Miss Marlowe some emotional moments.

The first performance took place at the Majestic Theater, Boston, on Monday night, December 26, 1908, to a crowded house. The press verdict on the play was unfavorable, but Miss Marlowe was deemed to have achieved another great success in *Yvette*, a success so great that it obscured the weakness and frippery of the piece. It might be called a case of the triumph of mind over meter. The newspapers commented upon this. One of them said that she brought to her task an unusual intensity of accomplishment and plied all the resources of her tones, all her mastery of the arts of diction, to give significance, vitality, and color to Miss Johnston's verse, which, so far as I could ever discover, was barren of these qualities. The true proportions of this achievement may be gathered from the fact that while the substance of the play was all re-



actionary, Miss Marlowe was not herself of any sympathy with reactionary sentiments or propaganda, and was in all this strictly the artist and nothing else.

She made the play. In her hand she molded it into something that could and did go with acclaim and profits. When she had shown it in many Eastern cities, she came to New York with it and on February 15, 1909, opened in New York in the former playhouse of her old enemy, Augustin Daly. She must have had odd sensations as she stood on that stage and thought of the wager that singular man had made about her. In twelve months she was to be extinguished and forgotten. Twenty years had passed and here she was playing upon his stage to packed houses that paid increased prices to watch her with breathless interest give life to the lifeless. Futile is prophecy—and more futile malice. "An audience that filled Daly's Theater bore ample testimony to the great affection in which it held Miss Julia Marlowe and the admiration with which it regarded her beautifully modulated and fervently poetic art," was the way the *World* phrased it. But as to the play, the critics would have none of it. One called it "Mary Johnston's mad drama," and wondered *Yvette* did not lose her reason before she lost her life. The public seemed to ignore the criticisms. Perhaps it did not believe them, or it may have been so much taken with the acting that it cared nothing about the merits of the vehicle. It continued to crowd the theater and it was evident that





*Photograph by White*

*Beatrice (MISS MARLOWE) AND Benedict (MR. SOTHERN)*



if Miss Marlowe chose she could enjoy the kudos and the tilth of another long run in the metropolis.

Her own attitude toward all this may be judged from an incident. She was now playing on a salary of \$2,500 a week, which was at that time a wage of luxurious dimensions; she was relieved of all care and responsibility about the business of the enterprise and of much of the burden of the stage performance. The arrangement might have been thought highly advantageous. She had gone into it rather reluctantly and upon stipulation that it should cover only a few weeks. When the great and brilliant success of her work in this play was apparent, Mr. Shubert, with whom she had her contract, broached to her a proposal to go on and finish the season upon the same terms. She instantly declined.

"Why not?" said Mr. Shubert's representative. "No one could expect to find a better arrangement."

"I would not do it for any money," said Miss Marlowe. "I am going back to play Shakespeare to the people. I have already arranged for a season at the Academy of Music at popular prices with Mr. Sothern."

"I think you are making a great mistake," said Mr. Shubert when he heard of this, and had come to remonstrate.

"Nobody makes a mistake that follows his convictions about his art," said Miss Marlowe.

The question of her future was agitating other minds than those of managers and for other reasons

than those of business. While she was still galvanizing "The Goddess of Reason" at Daly's there appeared on the same Sunday in two New York journals, the *Times* and the *World*, long dissertations on the singular position in which she stood and what on earth was she going to do about it? The singularity lay in this, that while she was now admittedly and beyond all comparison the greatest actress on the English-speaking stage, with none really to compare with her, yet there was nothing in sight for her to play. Both the eminent writers said this and so similarly that one might have suspected collusion if one did not know them. What was she to play? She could not go on as now breathing life into dry bones. The public could not always be expected to respond rapturously to a poor play merely because she appeared in it.

Then what? By her nature, convictions, and definite choice she must have a vehicle of a romantic and poetic nature. Mr. Mackaye had furnished this in his admirable "Jeanne d'Arc," a great play; but the public failed to welcome it. To do better than Mr. Mackaye had done was out of the question. To appear in modern drama of drawing-room stuff seemed at first almost as lunatic as to think of her in problem-plays and such trash. Then what? There was Shakespeare, of course, before whose shrine she bowed, but tell us not of Shakespeare. He is dead, the managers say; not deader here than in England. Nobody can play Shakespeare except occasionally and then with a vast spectacle or other novelty to

take the curse from it. The writer in the *Times* concluded that either Miss Marlowe must be contented to play to limited audiences, if she insisted upon her loyalty to romance and poetry in an unpoetic age, or she must seriously consider acting in modern pieces. "The newer school of modern drama contains much that might be inviting to an artist of her caliber," said this sage, "and her devotion to a more modern style of rôle might be a source of profit to herself as well as to the public."

Mr. Louis N. De Foe in the *World* thought that great poetic, romantic artist as Miss Marlowe was, she was forced to pay a heavy price for her greatness. Her career had come at a time when life had lost much of its old quality of romance and the tendency of the theater was to represent existence as it actually was. He thought the dilemma that she confronted amounted to a crisis. She had tried out plays like "The Sunken Bell" and "John the Baptist," and found they would not do. There was nobody to furnish new poetic drama except Percy Mackaye in America and Stephen Phillips in England and neither of these had written anything to draw the public in great numbers. What then should she do?

To all the persons agitated about this question she might have addressed words of consolation and cheer. Nothing of the kind disturbed her repose. She knew well enough what she was going to do. It was to be found in her response to Mr. Shubert's suggestion.


"I am going back to play Shakespeare to the people."

Her hopes had been greatly raised, too, in another direction. It seemed to her that, at last, there was arising in America a movement and a power capable of putting the drama upon the lofty plane where she believed it was entitled to stand as an art and the art most powerfully ethical of all the arts.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### DISASTERS OF THE NEW THEATER

O regularly recurrent are some of the operations of nature that entomologists, for instance, are now able to foretell, within a few days, the time of the return of the periodical locust, shard-back beetle, unadmired boll-weevil or nearly any other visitant catalogued in their useful and placid science. Similarly, it appears that about once in a calculable period excellent wealthy persons in the United States will be reminded, or perhaps will remind themselves, that the drama is of all arts the most neglected, and will be moved to do something to elevate it. The time was now ripe for the reappearance in New York of this phenomenon, and Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern were soon involved in it.

This was inevitable. Both had long believed and argued that only a municipal or an endowed theater could bring theatrical art in America to its proper dignity and full expression. It was a theme upon which Mr. Sothern often spoke with feeling and conviction at dinners, receptions, and assemblies that he was continually programed to address. When he was informed that a movement that promised to realize his hopes had been launched in New York

and that with Miss Marlowe he was invited to take a leading part in it, he felt that he could not possibly do otherwise at whatever cost. This feeling Miss Marlowe fully shared, and before the season of 1907-1908 had ended the contracts had been signed.

The intermittent spasm of interest in dramatic art had resulted in the forming of a society of rich men and women that undertook to finance a venture in serious plays to be performed for art's sake in a new and beautiful theater building, already well under way at Columbus Circle. Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern held in the unanimous thought of the public a position as artists so eminent and uncontested that instantly projectors, supporters, and all else turned to them as the only actors to head such a venture. Yet for all the fair looks of it and the fair hopes on both sides, they had been only a short time embarked in it when they began to feel beset with doubts.

One reason was a strange oversight by the amiable sponsors of the enterprise. These had begun with a vision of a new and gorgeous playhouse and of two famous players to attract audiences thereto. They never once thought that much more important than gilded cornice and brilliant color scheme was a company of actors able to play in the serious drama and somebody able to direct the playing. As a matter of fact, if wealth had really yearned to better the stage and to further art, it might have provided the actors and the stage management and forgotten cornice and color scheme.

Yet these patrons were quite sincere as far as they went and could see. From the beginning their idea had been that at the New Theater, which was the name happily chosen for the enterprise, there should be presented only the highest types of standard plays, done with the utmost care and completeness. Some of the salaried executives had a different notion. They said that in New York it would be impossible to maintain any interest in such plays, and that to secure audiences it would be necessary to give opera at least twice a week and new plays in the modern spirit quite as often. As Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern would play nothing but Shakespeare, or its equivalent, they could never approve of such a doctrine. To join in an enterprise of which the announced purpose appealed so strongly to their aspirations they had sacrificed all their own plans, allowed their company (gathered and trained in years of painstaking effort) to be dispersed, and finally had submitted to a management over which they had no control. They felt that this was as far as they could go. In their contract, therefore, they wisely stipulated that in every play in which they should appear they should command their own stage business.

It was desired to have a novelty of compelling strength with which to open the place at the beginning of the season of 1909-1910, and Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern must be the attractions in it. The management therefore selected Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" as suited to their purpose.

Miss Marlowe had never played *Cleopatra*, Mr. Sothern had never played *Antony*. The desire to see them in two new rôles would be great.

*Cleopatra* was a part that Miss Marlowe, left to herself, would never have selected, *Antony* was a hero that never would have appealed powerfully to Mr. Sothern. But they consented whole-heartedly to the plans that had been made for them and with characteristic energy put in the summer studying the play. Miss Marlowe, as was her wont, prepared for it one of her elaborate prompt-books, the business charted with care and every emphasis ascertained. The more she studied *Cleopatra* the more she saw in it and she came back for the rehearsals with her head full of the things she wanted to have done.

She and Mr. Sothern were now to learn, what they had never sufficiently realized, that the modern theater is a huge machine, abounding in intricacies that being so perfectly organized have come to be taken as a matter of course. The direction of the New Theater was inexperienced in these occult matters and largely at sea about them. A prompt-book such as Miss Marlowe had prepared struck it into pained surprise. Nearly everything that she deemed essential to the success of such a production was left undone. Accustomed for years to have all matters back of the footlights according to her will, the experience was new and distressing. The arrangement of two Shakespearean performances a week to be intermitted with modern plays

of the rip-roaring variety and then with an opera struck her as highly inartistic and as erasing the one purpose that had led her to sacrifice her own interests to this venture. The stage manager had been brought from England, where he had been of much renown, but he was quite unacquainted with American ways, unaware of the magnitude of his task, unprepared either mentally or by experience for the work to be done, and unsympathetic with the ideas of Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern as to Shakespeare.

The rehearsals had not proceeded far when it was apparent that the scheme was impossible. At last in a rehearsal it came to an open rupture with the stage manager about the business that by the terms of their contract Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe alone could control, and they felt that they could not go on.

Two weeks before the theater opened they sought the directors and gave notice that at the conclusion of the twelve weeks for which they had agreed to act in "Antony and Cleopatra" they would sever their connection with the New Theater. The directors were, of course, aghast at the news and made many attempts to break the players' resolution but it remained firm. More than the twelve weeks of "Antony and Cleopatra" that had been subscribed for they would not do. They recognized the fact that any word of their purpose made public or circulated among the actors would be an injury to the enterprise. They offered to keep the matter a secret

and to that end continued with the rehearsals as usual. They even went to the length of rehearsing in two plays in which they knew they would never appear, two modern plays of the type they detested.

The natural explanation of this wreck would be Temperament; of old it was written that an angel from heaven could not get along with a prima donna. Something of the kind seemed the likelier here because these two stars having been accustomed for many years to so complete an autocracy on their own stages, could ill brook another authority. In justice to Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe I may say that no riding of the high horse by either appears in the narrative. The trouble was a difference of fundamental conviction as to the way Shakespeare should be represented. Mr. Sothern was quite willing to take his place and follow a chart not of his making, but he was not willing to traduce his conceptions of the dignity and worth of the author he was trying to interpret. He had also come to have other doubts of the enterprise. There appeared an intention to make the New Theater a place of amusement for the rich and for them alone. This was not his hope nor Miss Marlowe's. What they wanted was an endowed theater for the masses, not a place to parade new dress patterns.

The New Theater opened with great *éclat* on the night of Monday, November 8, 1909. It was an event in New York society; the newspapers had lists of the occupants of the boxes and the kind of clothes they wore—directoire, empire, chiffon, mauve satin,



black gauze; I think I need say little more of the social importance of the occasion. The wealthy people of New York came out *en masse* to see their new plaything, and still more, if one may speak the brutal truth, to see one another. It appeared that to see the play was outside of their calculations; most of them came in after the playing had begun. That is to say, they dropped in casually after dinner to look at a new show in a new place. Miss Marlowe had been of late years so much annoyed by this careless habit of New Yorkers that while she controlled her own arrangements she made a rule that late comers should be held in the lobby until after the ending of the act then in progress. As she was not in control here she was powerless to prevent incessant slamming of seats, greeting of friends, movement and disturbance throughout the first two acts, although these botched the work of the actors on the stage.

There were 2,200 seats in the place and by the beginning of the third act they had all been slammed. The *World* said it was the most brilliant first night audience New York had ever known, but thought the magnificence of the theater dwarfed the play. This might easily be; more than \$2,000,000 had been expended upon the playhouse, equal to about \$4,000,000 to-day. The press found much fault with the acoustics of the house, which if they were as bad as it said, might account for the fact recorded by the *Morning Telegraph* that "an audience of varying dimensions of brow was painfully bored."

The scenery was costly and elaborate, being made by Ernest Albert from color drawings of Jules Guerin, but two of the critics insisted that its glories were eclipsed by the splendors of the house and therefore chiefly lost. Of what manner was the stage management may be gathered from the fact that at a formal dress rehearsal given on the preceding Saturday night, to which a select audience had been invited, the curtain rose at eight-thirty and the play was not over until just before one o'clock. On Monday night this glaring defect had been remedied by the simple but adequate means of leaving out two entire scenes. It appears that on Saturday night more than half of what was said on the stage was inaudible to more than half the persons in the seats and that nothing was done to correct this fault, not even a resort to the primitive expedient of causing the actors to speak more loudly. All in all, the prospects for the long expected uplifting of the stage seemed not nearly so brilliant as the audience, at which the newspapers were visibly awed.

It was an audience difficult to interest, and, in the existing conditions, difficult to hold. Here was little place for the out-and-out Shakespearean, the devoted worshiper, the fervent-souled student, and not much for the generality of the Marlowe clientèle. As to how good a *Cleopatra* she made, the critics were divided, and so was the public. Some of the writers thought that compared with her other creations this was a failure, and other authorities, no less reverend, hailed it as a memorable success.

Some said she realized the ideal of Shakespeare, some said she did not, and some were plainly wondering what that ideal was. To the general statement that she played with intelligence and insight there was no dissent, but when all was said the fact remained and probably bogged the critics more than they knew, that the part was not of the kind that called forth the best of her capacity. There was always to be observed a difference between the things she did with her mind working full tilt (but only her mind) and the things she did with no reserve of her individual sympathy; between her *Juliet*, for instance, and her *Salome*. In her moods when she strenuously upheld the dignity and supreme potency of art for art's sake she would not admit this; but it existed, nevertheless.

One hardly had need to say that she acted *Cleopatra* with all her mind and all her artistic conscience. She brought to every part the same intellectual honesty. No one could deny that she read with scholarly perception and careful accuracy, nor that she was on the stage a picture that satisfied the eye and met the requirements of the moment. When she uttered the lines,

Music, moody fool of us that trade in love,

she managed with a peculiar light touch on "trade" to suggest or to imply faintly or to infect one magically with such a sense of meaning that few had gathered before from that passage. Continually,

with her voice alone, she was bringing to bear upon the text a similar illumination. Yet I do not know to this day whether this was a great *Cleopatra*. I do not know that I ever saw a great *Cleopatra*, or that there can be one. This one made the death by the asp's sting seem not alone natural but inevitable, a thing sternly demanded by the fates, and that was undoubtedly a triumph of acting art. This one seemed, too, wholly the mistress of a difficult and complex psychology. Yet there was not about her work the same absorbing and definite completeness of power, it seemed to me, that had marked her in other Shakespearean rôles. It is but fair to say, that there were those in the house that night that did not share this feeling. Mr. De Foe of the *World*, for instance, thought this *Cleopatra* "a wonderfully varied, minute performance" that in the course of time would take rank with Miss Marlowe's finest Shakespearean impersonations, and others wrote similarly.

Mr. Sothern was viewed as having made all that was humanly possible of the part of *Antony*.

As a whole, the production was called disappointing, and in truth it seemed painfully different from the inspired stage-craft to which Mr. Sothern had accustomed us in the plays under his direction. One trouble was the construction of the house, in which the stage was so badly related to the auditorium it seemed doubtful whether the finer and more intimate values of any play could be transmitted well in such a place. As was to be expected, the blame

for these conditions was generally placed upon the poor actors, but with what justice may be learned from the fact that afterward the trouble about the acoustics at the New was found to lie in a faulty arrangement of the ventilating pipes.

"Antony and Cleopatra" went its two performances a week for the stipulated twelve weeks. Two nights in each week were devoted at the New Theater to modern plays, two nights to opera. It was soon evident to any observation that the venture was a toy of the rich of which the rich had already tired. Neither the modern plays nor the operas drew large houses. Nothing more was said about the duty to uplift the stage or to give drama uninfluenced "by incentives of cupidity." At the end of the season the magnificent new playhouse was given over to the unimpeded control of exactly such base and ordinary incentives and this form of the uplift passed into oblivion.

At the expiration of the time they had agreed to stay Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern quietly withdrew, assembled a company, and returned to playing their repertoire in a tour of the country.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE TRIUMPHS OF "MACBETH"



HIS is a life of toil, arduously performed and virtually unremitting. The end of each season devoted to heavy and exacting rôles found her physically exhausted, but usually confronted with the necessity of preparing a new production for the next season. Her summer days at Franzensbad or Rapallo must be spent in trying to regain her strength and equally in the studies that only began with the learning of a part. She had now been on the stage twenty-three years and this had been her life. Some of the new parts that she had added to her repertoire had been contemplated, viewed, studied and restudied ten years before anybody saw them acted; never in all her experience had she given to the public a picture that had not been deliberately conceived and carefully elaborated. Usually her studies overlapped. While she was preparing *Rosalind* for one season she had also in hand *Imogen* for another season far ahead. For twenty years she had carried in a corner of her mind the purpose to play *Lady Macbeth* when she should have perfected her conception of the part; and against the advice of some of her friends she



now deemed the time had come to carry out her purpose.

The contrary opinion of these friends flowered from the notion that both popularly and artistically it would not be possible for the same actress to achieve a great *Juliet* and a great *Lady Macbeth*. They admitted that the charm she exercised upon her public seemed powerful but held it to be based chiefly upon her work in the exposition of tender, idyllic and womanly poetic rôles. "She is the greatest of all *Juliets*, but she could never play *Lady Macbeth*," was a familiar bit of untutored criticism. Her own idea was quite different; she believed she could play well any part she felt deeply, and the deeper her feeling the better her playing. All these years she had been delving into the authorities about "Macbeth," handling her *Variorum* until the volume had gone broken-backed, and after that old habit of hers, covering the margins of the pages with her penciled notes. Her prompt-book, every page minutely scored over with her comments, had been prepared years before. She had settled in her mind the kind of a *Lady Macbeth* she thought was right and exactly how she should play it; and before the collapse of the New Theater she and Mr. Sothern had determined to make "Macbeth" the feature of their next season.

It was a step that Mr. Sothern, too, had for years contemplated and desired. He had analyzed the character of *Macbeth* and made of it what came afterward to be viewed as the most remarkable, rec-

ondite, original and interesting impersonation the stage had seen in many years. Pondering, weighing and comparing the lines, which is the only way Shakespeare is grasped, he had perceived that the part was not that of a ruffian, nor of a barbarian carried away with the glamour of place and power, nor even of a man obsessed with insatiable ambition; it was a profound study in human psychology and ethics. He saw in the lines "a man of starts and crises," susceptible to ambition, susceptible to fear, with a natural bent toward the superstitious, capable of good, capable of much evil, a human being, not a monster, not a prodigy. He was convinced, and always had been since his researches began, that Shakespeare did not deal in prodigies but in men and women. The great picture he conceived was of a man beset with weaknesses, beset with temptations that he had not the moral stamina to resist, and yet without the hardihood to face down consequences and remorse, until driven into a corner he would fight tiger-like and die gnashing his teeth. It was a marvelous conception that, as soon as he put it upon the stage, electrified and captivated all Shakespeareans. Perhaps scholarship in acting was never so completely vindicated. Further on we are to see by what means of art it was made living and real to the audiences that thronged to it and acclaimed it with wonder and applause.

All the arrangements for the production these straightforward artists made with the passion for research that is never satisfied. Every point about

the scenery was the subject of almost interminable inquiry. Histories, commentaries, essayists, libraries were ransacked, paintings, sketches and old prints studied, for details of the costumes. No person outside of the theater has or can have just conception of the labor involved in such a production. A lawyer working at a difficult case for the Supreme Court has less of a task and far fewer worries. The planning of a single scene may involve weeks of anxious and incessant toil, with endless experiments in colors, shades, lightings, before one comes to a consideration of the disposal of the characters in that scene. When the company was playing in London, to give but a hint of what this means, Mr. Sothern virtually lived in the theater. All his meals were brought in to him there; from early morning until after midnight he was incessantly at work correcting details, rehearsing, studying new effects. Without intermission this continued and it is a curious fact that he went away from London having seen there almost nobody except persons connected with his work. Despite the desire of actors, literary men, artists, and others to show him attention he was forced to deny himself social pleasures and to live on his stage, like some kind of hermit or modern anchorite.

He had been responsible for the magnificent stage pictures that accompanied "Jeanne d'Arc," "The Sunken Bell," and "John the Baptist." Now in "Macbeth" he outdid not only all his previous achievements but in splendor and breadth of design,

in historical accuracy and in artistic beauty anything the stage had seen.

The first performance after so many months of intricate preparation, came at New Haven, Connecticut, on the evening of Friday, November 4, 1910. The event was so unusual that the faculty of Yale University attended, one might say, in a body, and the great out-of-town newspapers sent special representatives.

From almost the first word she spoke it was evident that Miss Marlowe had disproved all misgivings about her ability to play *Lady Macbeth* and had revealed the full depth of a power some had not suspected in her—a power to portray the most tremendous human passions and reflect the utmost limits of human suffering. I may say frankly that although I had never been one of those that tried to dissuade her from this part, I was quite unprepared for work upon a scale so heroic. It seemed to me that this was the greatest thing I had ever seen her do. As in some subtle, indefinable way, she had added to her *Ophelia* the suggestion of an ineffable loneliness, so in this she had managed to cause us to know that *Lady Macbeth* was still young, that she had before her at the beginning of the debacle the sure prospect of a noble and happy life, and that she dragged into ruin with herself more than her soul. The power of this contrast that grew with every scene upon the beholder became at last so overwhelming that it was almost insupportable. It seemed as if we were looking upon the steady de-



*Photograph by W. A. Sands*

*Lady Macbeth*—"WHAT, WILL THESE HANDS NE'ER  
BE CLEAN?"





struction of a great, noble, and beautiful temple, shattered dome by dome before our eyes and at the last in some strange way threatening to involve even us too in its own illimitable catastrophe.

All the *Lady Macbeths* I had ever seen or heard of appeared ineffectual compared with this dread sense of resistless doom sweeping lives into a black abyss. Other *Lady Macbeths* had been potent tigresses, wonder-compelling fiends, beautiful savages, sad victims of ambition. This was the first I had seen that preserved throughout the human note, so that horror for her crimes, great as that was, never eclipsed a profound and soul wrenching pity. From the pages of the book and no other source came forth a woman, living, breathing, aspiring, despairing, sinning and suffering, struggling and dying, terrible and pitiable, but in every moment and at every step of her down-plunging, still a living, breathing woman.

On this first performance at New Haven the verdict was of a most astonished but unanimous approval. The intellectual dynamics of this *Macbeth* and this *Lady Macbeth* swept even the coldly critical from their feet. Marvel at these methods of stage production was, as it always should be, the echo of the marveling at the skill of the players. The cast was very large, the scenes many and elaborately done; but so careful had been the preparation that the whole vast machinery moved on its first showing without a hitch and one might have thought that this was the one hundredth instead of the first time it

had been given. When it reached Boston, at the Shubert Theater, November 14, the impression it created was of a great and noble effort, nobly conceived, nobly executed. Not for years had Boston seen anything to compare with it. One of the newspapers gave three columns the next day to a minute and careful analysis of its significance. It was with a kind of amazement that the writers dealt with the work of the principals. Was this the E. H. Sothern that had been so great in so many modern comedies, the clever, the quaintly ingenious, the amusing? Was this the Julia Marlowe that had been so tenderly poetic and graciously charming as *Viola* and so gently sad as *Chatterton*? We must give up, said one, all notion that Mr. Sothern's forte is comedy rôles; his command upon the whole range of tragic effects is still greater. The *Post* dwelt with grateful praise on the appearance of a *Macbeth* that owed nothing to any other. It was not Irving's, it was not Booth's, it was of its own kind and toweringly great. The *Transcript* pointed out what all the Shakespear-eans had noted with joy, the reverential attitude of the production; the play was done in its integrity. Among all the reviewers there was no difference of opinion. How sweet is unity! It was almost the first occasion in my experience when the critical brethren absolutely agreed about any native offering in the serious drama.

The effect upon the audience was extraordinary. There were moments when the whole great conclave of people hanging upon the action passing before

them seemed not to breathe, so intense was the silence, so complete the absorption. A layman that was there wrote afterward that he remembered a sensation as if he were being transported out of himself and was not again conscious of where he was until he found himself wandering down the cold street after all was over. He said there was a peculiar psychology laid upon the audience, so that most persons forgot they were seeing something played or were looking upon players. For himself, he had read about such moments in the records of the stage, but in forty years of playgoing he had not before encountered it.

The singular and subjugating power of each of these characterizations deserved all this attention. Mr. Sothern had conceived *Macbeth* at the beginning of the story as in the very rose of his best manhood. He dressed him with meticulous care, a great warrior, a general coming flushed from the victorious field, a kind of great resourceful viking that one must view with attention and something of fear. He wore the winged helmet of the fierce Northerner; the drooping mustache, the thin barbaric beard. He came upon us thus, the face still hard set from battle, even in the beak-like nose the suggestion of the thing of prey, the black hair falling about his neck, the long sword, the certain intimation of savage pride in his voice and mien. Then for all his valor in the field, behold him tossed by wild and shattering thoughts within; even in the first scene with the weird sisters one could see the image of

*Duncan's* death stealing across his vision and his very soul shaking at it.

Massive as this psychology seemed at the beginning it grew with an ordered crescendo from revelation to revelation. He was beset with fear and revulsion after the murder of *Duncan*; he bared in the scene that followed with *Lady Macbeth* all his red-hued torments, dragged to and fro between his ambition and his remorse; he was a palsied victim of superstition and frenzy in the tremendous Banquet Scene quailing at the vision of *Banquo's* ghost. There before our eyes he grew old; not from scene to scene, from moment to moment; not with the aids of artifice, from the intensity of his own feelings. The *Macbeth* that came upon the stage first in the prime of his strength began to look haggard and old when the murder was discovered, was gray and careworn with ridged and wrinkled countenance when he headed the table at the banquet; and at Dunsinane, waiting for his foes, showed a kind of wild and fearful specter, the appalling caricature of the first *Macbeth*, with glowing eyes, crouching steps, hair neglectedly in his eyes, his voice like the cry of the beast, the tortured soul within him dragging on and on the body that, stung with so much suffering, was still as powerful as his mood was desperate.

The last scene was a thing not to be forgotten. It was the castle of Dunsinane. *Malcolm* and *Siward* and their men fought their way into it step by step. As they battered down great doors there appeared a distant prospect of the sea, and arose the din of

battle from other parts of the fortress. *Macbeth's* men are slowly driven back until they are forced to surrender. Only the wild, tiger-like *Macbeth* is left and with him *Macduff* is locked in deadly struggle. There in his last corner, deserted and alone, he fought like a wild beast. Often by the sheer ferocity of his attack he drove *Macduff* back. A soldier ran in to help *Macduff*; *Macbeth*, raging and frothing, struck him lifeless at his feet. He beat *Macduff* to his knees; he fought and struck and parried. His sword was knocked from his hand; he whipped out his dagger and threw himself upon his foe, and when at last the fatal thrust passed through him he died with a wild beast's scream, and still struggling to get to his feet.

It was no wonder that impressionable persons trembled and felt an access of faintness, witnessing this tremendous scene.

Of Miss Marlowe's *Lady Macbeth* it was noted at once that so many years of intensive study, so much introspection and brooding, had produced a picture stamped with an extraordinary individuality. Little in conception or delineation resembled any other *Lady Macbeth* that one could remember. It stood basically on a clear prescience that love for her husband was the dominating power upon this woman's life, the strength of all her strength, the nerve of all her courage, the center and circumference of her being. This was no woman of the caves, no savage to whom daggers were familiar and murder easy. She was not even an impetuous vi-

rago, ruling her husband to his ruin; no, nor yet a creature of towering ambitions and undermined scruples, carried away with the prospect of greatness. She has a motive beyond and beyond all these—that great, mastering, compelling love in her! Everything else to this is nothing. That he may be king, not that she may be queen—she lures him to the murder. King! Macbeth, king! One could see her eyes flash and her whole being rise. Nothing less in the realm, in the world, would be worthy of this great and adorable man. She long had thought it.

Her first coming upon the stage struck this note. She entered quickly between parted curtains, reading her husband's letter, and she contrived to make it appear, as she dwelt upon its phrases, that she had read it before and was now fitting it into the plots she was vaguely forming. All through the first speech,

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor,

ran a potent suggestion of ripened premeditation. This man she loved stood next to the throne he would so ably fill; one life stood between; she had pondered that fact. One knew well that she had from the way she said:

All that impedes thee from the golden round  
Which faith and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have crown'd thee withal.



No question left as to whose was the faith. When in the next scene she came suddenly upon *Macbeth* the tone in which she whispered the simple words,

How now? What news?

made her listeners start with the suggestion that the murder was already done, so powerfully had she conveyed her terrible purpose.

All the conversation between *Macbeth* and his wife in the scene attending the murder was carried on in whispers in the midst of a tense silence, but so perfect was the vocalization of the actors that every word was heard even in the galleries. When *Lady Macbeth* came to the lines,

Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead

Are but as pictures—

even then it was apparent, strange as it may seem, when we come to discuss these things in cold type, that what moved her was not the impatience of a savage woman that had undertaken to kill and is all intent to have her victim, but only overmastering ambition for the man she loved with all the intensity of her nature. When she taunted him, she taunted from the depths of the affection that was all her life.

Step by step she unfolded the inmost psychology hidden in the depths of this surpassing creation.

From the moment of the murder *Macbeth* becomes more savage, brutal, ruthless, as he slips down the descent. In her the latent woman begins to awake; she begins to be assailed with horror and remorse, deepening and deepening until she sat with bowed head and unbound hair among the ruins of their lives—and they still young!

The Banquet Scene was done in a way unlike any that had before been shown on our stage. Mr. Sothern adhered to the objective ghost, but he made it not grotesque and impossible, as so often it had appeared—nay, startlingly real and boding! The power of Miss Marlowe's work in this scene was a spell, a sorcery, a clutch that seemed to seize and hold every heart. Queen, royal hostess, outwardly bearing herself with all the dignity of royal state, it was plain that her heavy, anxious thought centered on her husband. For an instant, and that only, the queenly bearing is shaken as she urges the startled thanes from the banquet hall. She stands and watches them go. *Macbeth* is sitting in his chair, moveless with horror and the certainty of more horror. She steals to him with a kind of motherly and anxious concern that shows again where her thought has been all this while. She sinks upon her knees beside him; with a caress of infinite tenderness she takes his listless hand in hers.

You lack the season of all natures, sleep,

she says and conveys into these words the compassion, sorrow, love, and remorse that wring her.

Moveless, he sits there staring moodily before him. Her eager eyes are fastened upon his for a long moment of silent solicitude. As she looks we can see the last hope die from her eyes and despair gather there, with all the incoming flood of knowledge of the disaster she has wrought. Passionate weeping shakes her; slowly she sinks until she lies before his chair, until her head lies on the ground before him, and her sobs are left with us as the scene ends.

It seemed then as if nothing beyond this were possible, the climax had been reached and passed, there remained in us no nerve still to be wrung. We erred that thought this. The Sleep-Walking Scene was to come, the supreme crux of the play, perhaps the supreme crux of all plays, the most difficult of all tests for the woman that will portray emotion through the art of the stage.

The scene was set with a broad and pillared staircase descending from a room above. Only the dimmest light seemed to drift in as if from the moon shining through far-away windows. For a moment there was neither sound nor motion. Then *Lady Macbeth* appeared at the head of the staircase. All still she stood; we heard from the depths of her being her dreadful sigh. Then she slowly made her way down the steps. One hand held above her the lighted lamp and only this hand and her head and face were clearly visible in the gloom. The face was deadly pale and terribly drawn; it seemed to reflect the very pallor of her soul. Her hair was un-

bound; she wore a long white robe. Slow step by slow step she came down the long staircase, her eyes open but fixed, staring and evidently seeing nothing. In the midst of a silence so profound it seemed like a vast, primeval solitude, she moved to the front and put down the light. Then she started the washing of her hands, accompanying it with a moaning, a low, insistent, penetrant moaning. It was a sound that seemed to every one that heard it to mean the fateful fulfilment of that horror and remorse she had begun to show in the Banquet Scene, the full measure of the emotions that then had begun to tear at our hearts. The little she said was uttered in ghostly whispers that rang through a breathless house with the last accents of the last woe of a mortal frame, wrenched and racked beyond endurance. The words, "Out, damned spot!" seemed made of pure pain and to quiver with a weary sorrow whose black depths were now for the first time revealed to the consciousness of men. When she reached the line, "Here's the smell of blood, still," the sounding of "still" was a note of final, hopeless and immitigable despair and of the ending of a long struggle.

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh!

and with that wailing cry it seemed as if an over-tensed cord of life had broken there before our straining sight.

She blew out the candle and the scene ended. Then a spasmodic sound, like an involuntary gasping swept up from the audience as men and women, leaning forward and transported out of themselves, seemed to regain consciousness and to take breath.

It was observed also that this portraiture in flesh and blood had throughout an even texture. Surely, irresistibly, it developed with every line. It looked from the beginning to a climax; it progressed to that end with stern, inexorable realism that again seemed more Greek than Anglo-Saxon. There was no instant from its first word to its last, when the hand that fashioned and the intelligence that overmastered it, did not seem to gather strength and become more fateful and more daunting.

From all sides arose a chorus of praise for this great work. In every aspect of it, its pictorial magnificence, richness of research, expert wisdom of stage direction, in broad conception and in minutest detail, and above all, in the wonder-moving power of the acting, the critics saw a lofty enthusiasm, a kind of exalted fervor to do fully and loyally. The scenic splendors were often the theme of pondering comment. One critic wrote that he had from these marvelous pictures a new and indelible impression, as of "somber walls, rather bestial and gorgeous feasts, gaudy trappings, the rather prison-like halls, of the eleventh-century home, and all the raw, rough passions that marked the world when it was young." Higher praise for scenic environment could hardly be written, for this proclaimed the

perfect achievement of all the aims that accessories can seek. In the view of one of the best informed of the Boston critics, the generation this work addressed would not see another presentation of this play so artistic, adequate, beautiful and satisfying.

When it came to New York, the *World* and other newspapers dwelt with emphasis on the great size and rapt attention of the audience and found that these proved, "if any proof were needed, the potency of the Shakespearean drama, when eminent players embody the characters." In its opinion, Mr. Sothorn's "finely conceived and vividly executed embodiment of the barbaric Scottish chieftain" was indubitable evidence of the just basis of his well-known ambition. It found the coordination of the chief performers admirable. "Let it be emphasized," it said, "that these two actors did not approach the work merely as a means to individual ends. The play at all times was the thing; the drama in its broadest aspect as a work of art was respected." It said further, with a kind of joy the habitual playgoer could well understand, that "the environment had its proper place in the scheme of the whole and the embellishments, while on a lavish scale, were not obtrusive or a distracting element to the audience."

One writer recalled that the Irving production of "Macbeth," fourteen years before, although done with all the original scenery from the Lyceum Theater in London, had failed to awaken interest in New York and that this experience had been in line with that of others endeavoring to make the play



popular. Even Mr. Booth, he said, played *Macbeth* for the love of its art and not because anybody wished to see it. The more admirable, then, the "artistic courage" of Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe, who, the writer found, had "staged the play with the same elaboration and thoroughness that they might expend upon an assured success." He concluded with this just tribute that Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe had "therefore put the American public under obligation to them once more for their efforts to provide some artistic and academic standard in our theater."

All the comments were of this order; it was as if critics had been awe-struck into an admiration they had never expected to feel for any playing. Alan Dale wrote that those that held Shakespeare not to pay should go attentively to the Broadway Theater and see this production and its effects. He thought the handling of the Banquet Scene wonderfully able and pointed out the great difficulties that beset it. So well was it done here that he marveled "Macbeth" was so seldom played, for the range of the drama had little to offer as strong as this. Another critic thought it might be doubted if the scene preceding the murder had ever been fraught with greater meaning or made more powerful with subtle shadings than in the playing of Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe. Another held that "the representation was such as the scope of tragic interest in the play, the somber splendor of its backgrounds and the nobility of its lines all call for, but so seldom

receive." Another, like Alan Dale, made note of the disapproval of the ancient superstition about the failure of Shakespeare to attract, and declared that there existed an enormous Shakespearean public if it could be reached, as Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe reached it. Another said, "It is doubtful if on the whole a more handsome or graphic panorama of the tragedy was ever shown."

On the following Sunday appeared an interview with Mr. Sothern from which it appeared that the production cost \$25,000, equal to more than \$50,000 to-day, and had necessitated a prodigious amount of work. "It was a difficult play to present," said Mr. Sothern, "because of popular aversion to the principal characters. It has never been a profitable play and never has been presented for long runs, but it will be valuable to us in repertoire."

Some persons had wondered at the introduction of a ballet and a song in the scene of the witches' dance. Mr. Sothern said of this: "I did it to relieve the somberness of the play. There is absolutely no comedy in the drama except the porter's speech, and I thought that a note of beauty, indicated by the 'song within' of the stage directions, would be appropriate. Either the witches could stand on the stage and listen to a song within, or the song could be visualized. I decided upon the latter."

"Macbeth" surpassed all previous records of its performance in New York, in its attendance and in the length of the run. When it reached Philadelphia, January 10, 1911, an almost unprecedented

interest had been aroused and the house was sold out within a few hours of the opening of the advance sale; as soon, in fact, as the tickets could be put through the box-office window. That the performance more than justified this interest was testified to by all the press the next day. The triumphs in Boston, New York and elsewhere were repeated here. There was no dissent from a confession of faith open-hearted and generous; the laurels were bestowed with ungrudging hand. Mr. Sothern's *Macbeth* was named in Philadelphia as it had been elsewhere, "a study of surpassing research." The *Star* said it rose to "really great heights of poetic histrionism" and the *Times* that it "added another to his long list of tragic portraits well drawn." The *Item* said that he brought to the rôle a wealth of polish, experience and scholarship that placed it among his greatest achievements.

He had spoken truth when he said in his interview that among the plays of Shakespeare this was conspicuously difficult to make popular, for it is only gloom and sorrow pursuing sorrow from the first note to the last, and this generation does not willingly go to have its nerves racked and its heart-strings wrung. I have touched upon Miss Marlowe's part in the theater as the task of popularizing the unpopular and inducing people to see what they do not wish to see. It was never more successfully performed than in Philadelphia on this occasion where, despite the grim and even terrible nature of the play, the demand to see it became so great

that an extra *matinée* must be given to accommodate the applicants for seats. No printed tribute could offer equally convincing evidence of the reality of the triumph. The general public does not care to see Shakespeare; the general public does not care to see any play that harrows its feelings and sends it home depressed. Yet here the general public was clamoring for an opportunity to see Shakespeare's most harrowing play. A beautiful and competent art had overthrown a rooted prejudice; the drama had vindicated its ethical mission as much as its æsthetic.

"Julia, the greatest sermon ever preached is the tragedy of 'Macbeth.'"

Often in those days she recalled that sentence. Her part of the preaching was done at heavy cost. Her own emotions were so wrought upon at every performance that she came from the last scene utterly exhausted and whenever she played "Macbeth" must spend all the next day in bed.

I have made here more than the usual number of citations of critical comment about this work because they have more than the usual significance. It is not common, it is most uncommon, to find concerning any new performance of any play so great a unanimity of judgment. To please all, to overcome in all minds whatever distaste or prejudice may linger there, to obliterate all fond memories of youthful days and the roseate halos of their players, is not humanly possible. It was more nearly achieved by the Sothorn-Marlowe production of

"Macbeth" than by any other venture in Shakespeare of which I have knowledge or have been able to find record. On the stage the play is inherently the most difficult of all Shakespeare's works. To do it to so great and vibrant and sincere a chorus of praise from so many diverse voices—certainly here, if ever in our times, was one of those eminences in the history of the drama that will be thumb-marked and reference-dented in some new *Collier's Annals* of other generations.

It was something else. It marked the summit of a career that had been led so many years with such unflagging effort after such high ideals. If there had been doubtful observers when this career began there were none left unpersuaded now. Julia Marlowe had attempted the most difficult of all tragic rôles; it had proved in her hands the greatest of all the long line of her glorious creations. The thing was done of which she had dreamed when she was going about the country in the "Children's Pinafore Company," when she was *Heine* in "Rip Van Winkle," the *Page* in the "Little Duke." She had added her name to the list of the world's great actresses whose fame does not perish.

## CHAPTER XXV

### WAR SERVICE: BACK TO THE STAGE



R. SOTHERN and Miss Marlowe now stood in such a position before the public as few actors have ever held in any age or country. They were everywhere and by all shades of thought acknowledged as preeminent and unequalled in the masterly and artistic interpretation of Shakespearean rôles. The newspaper comments on the thoroughness with which they had disproved the tiresome old saw about Shakespeare and ruin became in turn almost tiresome.

All lovers of art for its own sake rejoiced to reflect upon the methods by which this supremacy had been won. From first to last, whether playing alone or in partnership, neither had departed from the straightest line of one endeavor. They had never countenanced in their work on the stage, in the necessary publicity that must attend it, in their attitude toward their art, anything that savored of the bizarre or the tawdry. They had never tried to make money. They had never thought of any other guide in the shaping of their performances than the text as study had revealed it to them. They had never compromised to the estimation of a hair



with their ideals. On the reward they now reaped there was no fleck of reproach. It had been honestly earned.

The rest of that season of 1910-1911, was a kind of triumphal march across the continent. Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, and the Pacific coast cities saw this "Macbeth" and stamped it with an almost identical approval. The other plays in their repertoire were not abandoned. "Romeo and Juliet," "Twelfth Night," "Hamlet," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merchant of Venice," and "As You Like It," made a list of Shakespearean productions greater than any other company had ever carried across the continent. California hailed them; they were invited to play in the newly-constructed Greek theater of its University; and there in this beautiful reproduction of the birthplace of the drama to a vast and fascinated audience they played "Macbeth" and brought to the inspiration of Æschylus the inspiration of Shakespeare.

That summer, 1911, in London, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe were quietly married. Their artistic and business partnership had been led in the most complete harmony; their tastes, ideas, and ambitions were in all ways the same; and their friends felt that here was a union uncommonly auspicious and happy. For business reasons, Mrs. Sothern continued to use Julia Marlowe as her stage name and to be so known in all her public relations.

They returned to America in September and on October 30th, at the Shubert Theater, in Brooklyn, resumed their work as joint stars, giving their "Macbeth." They had determined to make this the feature of the season, and could easily do so, for it had as yet been seen in only a few cities. The tour mapped for them went into southern and north-western states where they had not been in several years. The repertoire was to be unchanged from that of the previous year.

November 6th they began an engagement in New York, risking the huge Manhattan Opera House, where Shakespeare had not before ventured. The result approved a sound judgment; the place was crowded nightly. Their "Macbeth" was the opening play and repeated in all respects the success of the year before. The critics agreed that in the few months that had elapsed, more study and more practise had made Mr. Sothern's *Macbeth* even greater than on its first showing. This verdict was renewed wherever the production had been seen before and was now repeated. Chicago, I recall, made this acknowledgment with a rare emphasis, made it even with feeling, with a kind of exultation as if something had been long hoped for and at last secured.

At Chicago, too, Mr. and Mrs. Sothern began a custom they continued ever after of giving for school children special performances of Shakespearean plays. This was on the 14th of May, 1912, and more than 2,000 school children assembled to see "The Merchant of Venice." There

had been at Lincoln Park, a few weeks before, a Shakespearean pageant in which the children had taken part and they came to the theater dressed in the costumes they had worn on this occasion. It was recorded in the press accounts that these youthful auditors were attentive, well-behaved and intelligently appreciative. Without difficulty they caught all the points in the play and when it was over, they applauded until Miss Marlowe came forth and made them a little speech in her best manner for readiness of wit and charm.

The Drama League had arranged a series of prizes to be presented to the public schools that had produced in a competition the best essays on Shakespeare. The prizes were his portraits; the presentations were made by distinguished actors then in Chicago. Besides Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe there were Otis Skinner, Margaret Anglin, J. Forbes-Robertson, William Faversham, David Warfield and Walker Whiteside. To Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe was assigned the Wendell Phillips school. They accompanied the present with an autograph letter and Mr. Sothern added some remembrances of his own.

It was set down by the press as a fact for history that when this engagement in Chicago opened on May 6, 1912, the box-office receipts had amounted to \$18,000.

This year they began to rent furnished houses in the cities they visited and ceased to go to hotels. In this way they secured greater comfort

and much greater quiet. They had long before given up the private car for living quarters while on their travels because this device, although alluring, is for folk with any nerves beset with demoniac horrors—puffing engines, clanging bells, screeching whistles, and all the rest of the uproar of the switching yard where alone the car can be parked. A courier was now sent in advance to find a furnished house in a retired neighborhood and the cook and waiter went along to make sure of food on the table. A house, even a rented house, was some approach to that home of her own for which Julia Marlowe had been longing so many years. For two weeks, at least, often more, she could manage her own household and supervise her cooking. Why, yes—and with her own hands she could prepare dishes of her own devising and make them to her own fancy! She could even go into the kitchen and make bread!—bread in the good old Cumberland way, a benefaction to which she had been for thirty years a stranger!

The tour this season extended to Toronto, and ended at Buffalo the third week in June.

Both of these thoughtful and studious players whether alone or working together had long looked forward to a time when they might retire from the stage and in some quiet corner out of the noisy world pursue a life of dignified ease and intellectual enjoyment. It seemed now that the realization of this dream was at hand. Greatly they had produced great plays and added perdurable achievements to

the annals of the stage; what remained for them to do there seemed no longer to call with a loud voice as formerly. Miss Marlowe had found in England the country place before mentioned; in all respects it was answerable to her dreams. When the season of 1912-1913 opened it seemed to them that this and the next thereafter would be the last on the stage. They might return for brief engagements, but with long and regular stage tours they should be done.

They began at Syracuse, New York, September 23, that fall of 1912, and played through until June 11, at New Haven, but in all that long season of nearly nine months did not go out of the eastern states. The repertoire, with two interesting exceptions, was the same as that of the previous season. Mr. Sothern added to it, "Richelieu," which he had not played for several years, and with Miss Marlowe revived "Much Ado About Nothing."

Some critics wondered why it had been so long in abeyance, since Mr. Sothern's *Benedict* and Mrs. Sothern's *Beatrice* were among their greatest portraits. These worthy gentlemen were evidently unaware of the mystery about this play that has long puzzled those familiar with the inside of the theater's business. "Much Ado About Nothing" is a famous drama to read. It contains some of Shakespeare's most popular lines, and one of his most popular creations. *Beatrice* is a fascinating character; *Benedict* is a most attractive soldier and

lover. There is range of delightful comedy; also there is a chance for powerful acting of the most serious kind.

Yet, somehow, with the public it will not go. Nobody can make it go. Everybody likes to read it; nobody seems to be urged to go often to see it. Uniformly when Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe gave it the attendance fell off. In a week's engagement every other play of their list would draw crowded houses, "Much Ado" alone, would show empty seats. Not many, but even two were now become significant. Empty seats in the teeth of the most eulogistic notices for all the principals and for the production; eulogies reasonably based, for in the latter years Miss Marlowe's *Beatrice* was unquestionably one of her most finished impersonations and Mr. Sothern was called the ideal *Benedict*. They acted with great spirit, their picturings were truly and subtly drawn, the late Rowland Buckstone never failed to convulse the audience with his *Dogberry*, the accessories were most careful, accurate, gorgeous. All left the public pleased, never cold, but still never inclined to come back in great numbers to see the play. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe were but repeating the experience of all that have tried in modern times to make this piece popular. It was not by box-office exhibits that they were to be intimidated. More than once they had shown that where an artistic end was to be gained they were ready and willing to play at a loss. But as the case stood, there was not quite enough art in



"Much Ado" to justify them in persisting in it, regardless of the public response.

I once asked Miss Marlowe how she accounted for the general attitude toward this play.

"The trouble," she said, "is with the by-plot. When Shakespeare wrote it he had in mind to make the story of *Hero* and *Claudio* the main theme throughout and *Beatrice* and *Benedict* only a secondary interest. This answered well enough for his times; no doubt the play was then eminently successful. But modern taste has found the by-plot the chief interest and looks at the main story with indifference. Now in the development of the story everything is made to contribute to the main theme. Consequently the side issue of *Beatrice* and *Benedict* goes just far enough to whet the modern appetite for more and leaves it unsatisfied; for it is forever switching back to the story about which a modern audience is not and cannot be much moved. There is not enough character strength in the parts of *Hero* and *Claudio* to engage the abilities of principal actors and there is not enough of *Beatrice* and *Benedict* to satisfy the audience. You see it is left like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth."

The engagement in New York was again at the great Manhattan Opera House and lasted five weeks. Considering the size of this auditorium it is important to notice that, playing only Shakespeare they drew every night, except for the few performances of "Much Ado" the utmost capacity of the house. The reception had never been so cordial;

press and public were moved by the fact that these two performers that so long had upheld the noblest traditions and highest standards of the stage were soon to leave it. All the criticism commented upon the growth in their hands of all the characters they essayed. Some writers recalled Mr. Sothern's *Hamlet* as he had begun to play it and then described the *Hamlet* he now offered, so competent in poetic insight, and refined with the labor of the study.

Miss Marlowe did not appear in "*Richelieu*," which was used chiefly at matinées. As always before Mr. Sothern's *Cardinal* was deemed one of his strongest rôles. "Nothing could have shown E. H. Sothern's versatility to better advantage," was the judgment of the *Philadelphia Times*. "As the old *Cardinal* he was superb. His *Richelieu* was thoroughly human; an iron-hearted man, no doubt, but made lovable by his affection for youth and a sense of humor." The *Star* also pointed out that to appear in the afternoon as *Richelieu* and in the evening as *Malvolio* was an acid test of any actor's range. It thought this *Richelieu* "a masterly figure, clear cut and sketched with consummate skill."

The attendance on this tour continued to be phenomenal, establishing new records in Shakespearean performances. In Chicago, for instance, it was necessary for the theater management to advertise that all seats had been sold that it might save useless journeyings to the box-office. In Milwaukee

all previously chronicled theater receipts were exceeded, hundreds of persons, the newspapers noted, having been turned disappointed from the box-office. At the four performances the total attendance was more than 6,500. In every city visited there were manifestations of much more than admiration and Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe might have learned then if they had not before suspected what a place they had won in the affections of the public.

The summer of 1913 was spent in Europe and chiefly in the village of Broadway, among the Cotswold Hills of Worcestershire, England, the place of Miss Marlowe's desires.

The season of 1913-1914 began in New York in October and extended westward to the Pacific coast, which Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe had not visited since 1911. In January, 1914, while playing in Los Angeles, Miss Marlowe was taken ill. The physicians that were summoned advised an immediate operation. She refused to admit that this was necessary and returned in a private car to New York, where she was confined for weeks to her bed. By Shakespeare's birthday she was sufficiently recovered to appear in public and to read with exquisite effect, at the anniversary celebration, Ben Jonson's tribute, and some of the sonnets that she loved most.

Mr. Sothern finished the season playing "Hamlet," "If I Were King," "Lord Dundreary," "Riche-lieu," and a new play by Justin McCarthy called "Charlemagne," in all of which he was eminently

successful. In June Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe went abroad intending to take up their residence at Broadway and enter upon their long-expected haven of rest and study. From this pleasant prospect they were rudely ejected by the war. From the outset they were on convictions warm supporters of the Allies, whose cause they believed they could serve more effectually in America than in England. They returned to the United States and Mr. Sothern organized a company and went upon tour, playing "If I Were King," and presenting the receipts to the British Red Cross, a munificent generosity warmly recognized in England. Upon the entry of the United States into the war, Mr. Sothern offered his services in the work of entertaining and caring for the enlisted men. He was eagerly snapped up by the Young Men's Christian Association and went to the front, where throughout the winter of 1917-1918 and until some time after the armistice, he was busily engaged at various camps.

Meantime, Miss Marlowe was contributing her invaluable help at patriotic rallies and bond sales. At all the great meetings in New York she appeared to read in her inspiring way "The Star Spangled Banner," or "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and she was often a speaker or reciter at open-air meetings.

One aspect of her delivery, on these occasions, was apparent to every trained musician as the key to some of her most moving effects, and yet I have never seen it so much as referred to. I mean the

command she had over musical phrasing even in prosaic recitals, even in her off-hand speeches. In reading, she handled her phrases exactly as an expert singer would handle them from a musical score. I will give as an example the way she read "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Here is the first phrase as she gave it:



The staves indicate the approximate pitches, the single lines show the ordinary emphases, and the double emphasis at the climax is indicated by double lines.

Miss Lola Johnson, of Washington, D. C., to whom I am indebted for invaluable assistance in making these investigations, in a note accompanying her observations says:

It is remarkable that where the word following offered no good vowel, Miss Marlowe, with marvelous vocal dexterity, placed the second consonant just where the preceding consonant had been placed, preserving the continuity of the phrase.

She carried the line of resonance throughout, sustaining it by perfect breath control and skilful articulation. The re-

sonant consonants, *m*, *n*, *l*, and even the unresonant consonants, were linked by the melody of the vowels, the *e* being delivered with ringing effect.

This is Miss Johnson's legato and dominant analysis:

m	n	i	s	h	v	s	n	t	h	g	l	1	o	f	t	h	c	m	n	g	o	t	h	l	d
Mine eyes have seen the											GLORY of the				coming of the				LORD						
											liquid				liquid										
sybillant aspirate																									

Similarly, when she came to:

He has loosed the *fateful* LIGHTNING of *His terrible swift sword*,

she gave out the last three words with increased impetuosity and incision but preserved perfectly the demands of the phrase. When she reached the last line in that stanza, this is the way she read it:

*His truth* (pause) *is marching on*

and the slow fall of the notes from the climax downward wrought a profound impression of authority.

And again in:

*His day* (pause) *is marching on.*

She had a way of crisping out the sharp consonants in a decisive passage that showed she must



have studied the meanings of poems as much as of characters:

He has *sounded forth* the TRUMPET that shall *never call*  
RETREAT,

where she had an excellent incision on the *t*'s in  
"trumpet" and "retreat" and the hard *c* of "recall."

He is sifting out the hearts of men

When she came to the circumflex on "sifting," by carrying the descent unusually far and starting it on a key somewhat lower than would be expected, she made that word stand forth and seize upon and sober the imagination with that full sense of the *Dies Iræ* the line was framed to carry.

In such phrases as,

I have *seen Him* in the WATCH FIRES of a *hundred circling*  
*camp's*,

it was the peculiarly warm tone-color she used in lowered pitches that produced that effect of reverential awe that always left her hearers tingling.

The strength of the legato that made up so much of her vocal equipment and she seemed able to use without a tinge of affectation, was never better seen than in

As *He died* to make men HOLY (slight pause) let us die  
to make men FREE

While God (pause) is *marching on*

and the final *n* sang like a prolonged bugle note, which was what it was intended to be.

In the fall of 1919 she joined Mr. Sothern abroad and the two were the brightest feature of many camp entertainments. Their work developed rather remarkable facts about the tastes of the American soldier. Mr. Sothern crossed, of course, on a transport crowded with troops, before whom he appeared nightly in recitations from Shakespeare or other standard authors. He was not quite sure that this was the best possible diversion for men going to battle. Early in the voyage he sought the chaplain, who was in charge of such matters, and said:

"My programs contain only selections from Shakespeare and the like. Now perhaps the men had rather have something of a lighter nature. If they prefer, I will gladly give them something else."

"I'll see," said the Chaplain, "and let you know."

He came back some hours after and said:

"Mr. Sothern, the men are unanimous. They say they would rather hear Shakespeare than anything else and they beg you to keep right on with such recitations as you gave last night. They don't want any light stuff."

As these included *Hamlet's* Soliloquy and the Dagger Speech from "Macbeth," it will be seen that the classics ranged high aboard this steamer.

He found the same conditions in the trenches. More than once he proposed to the men in charge of the hut programs that he should present something of a light or humorous character, but the

answer was always the same. What the men preferred was selections from Shakespeare. Once when Miss Marlowe and he had appeared at one of the great camps outside of London and had given the Shakespearean recitals in a long and varied program contributed by many performers, a committee of the men came to them and asked if they would be good enough to return the next night and give nothing but Shakespeare. They gladly complied and recited and acted some of their most celebrated scenes. The men had visited all the book stores in that neighborhood and stripped them of every available copy of the Temple, Pocket, and other small volume editions of Shakespeare. When the entertainment was over they came in swarms with fountain pens in hand to ask the players to autograph these copies. No such request was declined. One man came with a Temple "Cymbeline."

"The other fellows got ahead of me," he said, "and this was the only play of Shakespeare's left in the place and they tell me you have never acted in this. But maybe you will write in it, anyway." Miss Marlowe smiled at the instability of theatrical records and said:

"But I have acted in it, and may act in it again, and I am only too glad to sign it for you."

In the late spring of 1919 they returned to America and took a furnished house at Litchfield, Connecticut, where they spent the summer. The announcement that at the beginning of the following season they would return for a time to the stage was

the theatrical event of that year, the news being received across the continent with a kind of outcry of satisfaction. It was felt that, deprived of these high-purposed actors and artistic producers, the stage had suffered an irreparable loss. There was nobody to take their places; without them was no adequate presentation of Shakespeare. They, for their part, had found, as actors usually find, that they missed in retirement the artist's joy of expression and to sever oneself from one's life work is not so easy as it may appear.

Mr. Sothern had been furthering his studies of stage effects and reached the conclusion that it might be possible to use simpler scenery with good results. The stage pictures he had made in previous productions were unequaled for artistic distinction and power, but there are, of course, about the most splendid investiture of this kind two unsettled queries. Does the beauty of the picture drag the attention of the audience from some necessary question of the play then to be considered? And does it anesthetize the auditor by leaving him nothing to imagine? Mr. Sothern believed it might be possible to indicate beauty in scenery without every detail of it, and he devised a series of backgrounds that with some small changes in the back drop, could be used for many scenes and in many plays. With the aid of lights and vistas he handled this so well that in this season the mounting of the plays was generally agreed to be better than ever.

The reappearance of these favorite artists was

the occasion for unusual tributes from the press and public. Their first play was "Twelfth Night" and when Miss Marlowe was seen upon the stage the vast and crowded house seemed to rise to her in a spontaneous welcome. The reception of Mr. Soth-ern was not less cordial, for while he had been seen in "If I Were King" in the war period, it was felt that after all his true home was in Shakespearean rôles and he had now returned to them. The *Sun* observed that the audience "seemed to have but one object in life and that was to show Mr. Soth-ern and his co-star how genuinely welcome they were. After each scene and each act there were from nine or ten curtain calls that were made to include every member of the cast."

The enthusiasm was so great that the stars were called upon for speeches. Miss Marlowe said a few graceful words of appreciation and Mr. Soth-ern, who was always most happy about these somewhat trying ordeals, told the audience how pleased Miss Marlowe and he were to be again at work.

In this season and again in the next that they played, Mr. Soth-ern and Miss Marlowe repeatedly surpassed in the size of the audiences they drew and in box-office receipts all previous records of all performances of Shakespeare in this country or any other. As in all probability the mark they set will not soon be displaced, it will be well to make note here of the figures pertaining to these achievements. The season of 1921-1922 went even beyond that which had preceded it, a fact the theatrical world

would not have deemed possible. The largest paying audience at an indoor performance of any play of Shakespeare that ever gathered anywhere assembled at the Century Theater, New York, on November 26, 1921, to see Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe in "The Merchant of Venice," when the receipts at the box-office were \$5,266.50. The next largest audience drawn similarly to a performance of a play of Shakespeare, was at the same theater on November 28, 1921, when Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe played "The Taming of the Shrew" to \$5,080. Similarly, for a week's engagement, these players made new records. At Poli's Theater, in Washington, D. C., for seven instead of the usual eight performances, the receipts were \$28,297, and this in Holy Week, the worst period of the dramatic year. An eighth performance would have brought this above \$31,000.

For fifteen years these players had been playing together. All the novelty of their conjunction had long worn off. It was no longer to gratify curiosity that people went to see them, but to enjoy, and again enjoy, the sheer and pure power of their art. The old problem was solved, the thing difficult was done. Shakespeare was played and seen for his own sake.

While they were appearing in New York, the newspapers, as notably the *Times*, commented at length upon the nature as well as the great size of their audiences as something profoundly significant and indicative of more than a passing psychology. With the tributes to her work that the *Times* critic



of that day laid before Miss Marlowe he might well have recalled the words his predecessor wrote after that first performance at the Bijou Opera House, thirty-two years before.

"Remember her name, for you will hear of her again."

Two worlds had heard of her since that time and crowned her the first of all their Shakespearean actresses.

She had done more than win to a place on this glittering height; she had conquered all doubt with all opposition. There was no longer any dissenting voice about her interpretations; the fact was recognized that whether as to *Katherine* or as to *Ophelia* she spoke with the voice of authority; she spoke by the book and from it. If she pictured *Katherine* this way or that, she drew with no hand moved by caprice or the cheap desire for originality that wrecks so many performances, but because this was the *Katherine* she had found in the text. Mr. Sothern and she played "The Taming of the Shrew" in this New York engagement and some one might have reprinted side by side the laudations that greeted it now and the astonished incredulity with which some had viewed it when first the same players had done it there fifteen years before. Never was vindication more complete and never more complete a demonstration that he that is right needs only to keep steadfastly upon his way. "The best *Petruchio*—the best *Katherine*" was now the verdict of press and public. Yet it was the same *Petruchio*,

the same *Katherine* that years before certain of the wise men had questioned and certain others had predicted could not last upon the stage. The life of an artist hardly allows a greener laurel. To sweep at once to an easy and acknowledged success is to go the way of Byron to oblivion. To think ahead to a great conception that first is not generally seen, and to convince of truth by demonstrating it, is to win the place that endures.

I have told of her broad-minded attitude about race prejudice. In April, 1920, while she and Mr. Sothern were playing in Washington, the teachers of Paul Dunbar High School (colored) debated among themselves whether they dared to ask these distinguished artists to visit their school. This being brought to the notice of Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern they said without hesitation they would be glad to accept such an invitation. Mr. Sothern cheerfully consented to recite for the children and Miss Marlowe said she would, too, if her health, which was bad, would allow her to do so. The news stirred the colored population; it was the first time white actors of prominence had agreed to appear before such an audience. When the afternoon came the place was besieged. Miss Marlowe was tired and ill. She asked to be excused from reciting anything, but she sat on the platform while Mr. Sothern gave to a fascinated audience his great readings of the Battle Speech from "Henry the Fifth," *Hamlet's* Soliloquy and some of the noblest poems of the war. At the end of one of these im-

pressive readings, Miss Marlowe was observed to turn and speak to some one behind her, who disappeared and came back with a book that she gave to the visitors. Then Miss Marlowe came forward and the next moment the marvelous voice that had captivated so many hosts of hearers on two hemispheres rose upon the air in the solemn measured cadences of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." I do not know that she ever seemed greater and I do not know that at any moment of her career she was creating a more profound impression. I need not say that the familiar lines took on new meanings as she read; that they always did. But what seemed still more a thing for memory was the effect upon the children, overcome at once with two subduing sensations, the beauty of the thing they heard and the novel beauty of the thought that famous white persons had cared enough about them to visit and read to them.

After the "Battle Hymn" she gave "Flanders Fields," which no one could hear from her and remain unmoved. I asked her afterward why she had at the last moment departed from her purpose to save her strength that day. She said that as she sat there and looked into the faces before her and saw how the minds of those children were responding so perfectly to the lines Mr. Sothern read, the thought came to her that these were human beings that would not be allowed to hear her in a theater and that thereupon she made up her mind to read for them no matter what might be the cost to her.

The next day she received this letter from one of the colored teachers:

Dear Mrs. Sothern:

Words are quite inadequate—except for the few—when one attempts to reveal depth of feeling through them. But I cannot help trying to tell you how we, at Dunbar, cherish the memory of your visit and Mr. Sothern's.

I may not be a judge of artistic greatness but surely only greatness of soul could have revealed to us, as you and Mr. Sothern did, the oneness of humanity at its depths. In some marvelous way your presence with us in that high school auditorium has given a new revelation of the brotherhood of all men and has gone far to stifle the bitterness of spirit constantly fostered by the peculiar injustice we suffer.

Of course, we enjoyed the reading, how should we not? We are especially glad for the call to our boys to manhood, and we felt our spirits rise to meet yours in the "Battle Hymn." But most of all we have from that visit what will live not in our memories but in our lives—a new revelation of the fundamental wholeness and sweetness of human nature.

You see how I must try to thank you and Mr. Sothern—and yet how I cannot.

Most gratefully yours,

CHARLOTTE ATWOOD.

The repertoire was small in the season of 1919-1920, only three plays, "Twelfth Night," "Hamlet" and "The Shrew"; but with these old favorites the public was content and the players happy. "Those that achieve the greatest results in the theater," said

Mr. Sothern, addressing an audience of high school pupils in St. Louis about this time, "lead a most joyous, a most interesting, and an almost ideal existence. Though laborious, it is the most satisfying kind of a life." It was an observation that defined his own experience and that of Miss Marlowe.

The attitude of the country toward them may be thought to have been well expressed in an editorial that appeared in the *New York Times* of October 11, 1919, a few days after their triumphant return to the American Stage:

#### Two Noted Shakespeareans

Nothing more important has happened in the history of the theater in America of late than the return to the stage of Julia Marlowe and Edward Hugh Sothern after an absence of five years from active professional life.

Their reappearance in "Twelfth Night," with the incomparable Mr. Buckstone as an associate, really meant the picking up and splicing of the loose ends of the classical tradition of the art broken by the war. A new generation of young people just coming to years of discretion is to have a chance to enter the fairyland of romance created by the noblest man who ever wrote in our language.

We have no reason to be ashamed of Shakespearean scholarship and acting as displayed in this country. But our public, like the public of Great Britain, has reason to complain that managers are comparatively uninterested. Germans were able to boast truthfully for years that there was not a small theater in their land in which plays by the supreme dramatist of our language were not produced regularly. They went further in impudence and boasting—even

so far as to claim Shakespeare as a Teuton. The compatriots of the ponderous and unreadable Dr. Gervinus, with his chatter about "mortals," remarked with fine unctio: "We Germans, not you English or Americans, alone understand Shakespeare. Walter Savage Landor may have said 'Shakespeare is not our poet but the world's': the truth is he is only understood by us."

At the height of one of the great drives at the heart of France the then Kaiser took a few minutes off from plucking violets and weeping over the misfortunes of misguided Belgium to insult the English-speaking nations by announcing that he proposed to celebrate his ultimate victory by issuing an edition of Shakespeare with prefaces and notes by his scholars.

In Shakespeare is the finest expression of the idea of nationality to be found anywhere. The war has made even theater-goers more serious than they were, and has certainly turned their attention to the great things which made our civilization worth fighting for and dying for.

It is satisfactory to note that it is in America, and in the city of New York, that the Shakespearean revival has become an accomplished fact, thanks to an actor and an actress who have the utmost reverence for the plays which they interpret so nobly and intelligently.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### DOCTOR MARLOWE



WO features of that season of 1919-1920 were remarkable. As we have noted, the receipts from the performances were everywhere beyond precedent. This blessed the newspaper writers in the dramatic department with a handy text for Sunday. They could show how little he knew who made that old fallacious saw about Shakespeare and the box-office; for these actors playing only Shakespeare to surpass in each city all previously recorded receipts in such plays was become the regular experience. Next, the joy of the audiences was as notable as the business done. This produced the other feature of the season, which was that they had become the favorite topic for the editorial wherever they appeared. Learned editors used them to point morals and adorn wisdom. As thus: You see these two artists that have reaped all this splendor of fame and fortune? They have achieved not alone by their genius and hard work, but as much by their resolute adherence to their ideals. No compromise with the artistic principal has been their rule. It appears therefore that in the end the highest ideal must be the wisest practise—and so on.

Naturally, as they had thus become an exhibit in the halls of philosophy, they were in daily request to appear as speakers before schools, colleges and societies. The nature of their work forbade them to do overmuch of this, but Mr. Sothern was sometimes able to deliver one of his happy addresses before students or civic bodies. Often he spoke upon the requisites of success in life and particularly in the calling of the actor. Usually when he had done this he found his remarks endorsed the next day in the editorial columns of the local newspaper. As in the case of Irving, the actor had become much more than an entertainer; he was now a social force.

Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe had not turned from the hope that had once appeared to them of a quiet life among their books, but it seemed now that by playing alternate seasons they might know the pleasures of such an existence and still not surrender all there is in artistic creation. The winter of 1920-1921 they passed in Washington, which had always been the American city they most admired, and here a signal honor befell Miss Marlowe. Some time before, George Washington University had bestowed upon Mr. Sothern the degree of Doctor of Letters, the first time any American institution of learning had so rewarded an American actor. On February 22, 1921, occurred the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University, and among the honors conferred that day was the degree of Doctors of Letters upon Julia Marlowe, the first actress in America to be so distinguished.

In bestowing the degree, Dr. William Miller Collier, the Chancellor, said:

"Julia Marlowe Sothern: Foremost living American actress in tragic and romantic rôles; greatest interpretress of the immortal bard of Avon. You have made letters so live in the hearts of myriads and have so instructed and inspired them that all who have seen and heard you with universal admiration and gratitude exclaim, in the couplet of Thomas Heywood:

The World's a theater, the earth a stage  
Which God and Nature do with actors fill.

The event drew the attention of the nation and the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, commenting editorially upon it, said:

Doctor Julia Marlowe.

A graceful compliment was paid to the women of the stage when Julia Marlowe was included in the list of distinguished persons to receive honorary degrees on the centenary of George Washington University. This delightful actress is now a Doctor of Letters, the first player of her sex to receive similar academic honors in America.

During a career extending beyond thirty years, Miss Marlowe has been identified with the drama that uplifts the cultural standards of audiences. She has brought mental qualities of a high order and exceptional artistic gifts to the interpretation and personification of Shakespearean heroines.

If, at times, Miss Marlowe has lent her fine histrionic endowment and her arch vivacity to plays that fell below her artistic stature, such rôles as she had in "When Knighthood Was in Flower" and other "romantic" specimens were relatively sparse. None of the famous actresses of the past, back to and including Sarah Siddons, appeared in so few inferior plays as Miss Marlowe.

In the early spring of 1921, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe went to England and remained there until the beginning of the next season, that of 1921-1922, when they resumed their work in the theater, playing the same repertoire as on their last previous tour, except that now "The Merchant of Venice" was revived and added. This was also an exceptionally successful season; one might now be sure that these players were so firmly fixed in public affection that they could continue to play as often or as little as they pleased and still be enshrined as the first of all favorites.

The summer of 1922 was spent near St. Moritz, in the Engadine. Miss Marlowe found in the remoteness and quiet beauty of the Engadine valleys and in their pure mountain air the best conditions for rest and health. Mr. Sothern and she had decided not to act the following season, that of 1922-1923. They remained in the Engadine until almost all other visitors had gone, until snow had begun to fall and the winter was at hand, when they moved to Montreux on Lake Geneva and in January of 1923 returned to New York.

As a novelty for the following season, that of

1923-1924 they had decided upon a revival of "Cymbeline." Nearly thirty years had passed since Miss Marlowe had been seen as *Imogen*, which many critics had hailed as, up to that time, the noblest product of her art. The play is seldom done on the modern stage because its difficulties are too great. Miss Marlowe knew these well enough, but the part of *Imogen* had always greatly appealed to her, as it has to all others of the poetic temperament, and she felt an urge to do it again. Preparations for the production were made with the habitual deliberation and study. Mr. Sothern had all the costumes designed in London by the artist whose work is best known for its skilful union of perfect accuracy and perfect color schemes. Sothern-Marlowe mis-en-scene had long been famous for beauty and artistic taste; in some respects this "Cymbeline" surpassed the high standard of previous years. When the curtain rose upon the first performance in New York in October, 1923, there had been expended upon its setting more than \$60,000.

One thing had been overlooked, or not enough counted upon, or perhaps not suspected. A new idea about Shakespearean plays had appeared in New York. Shakespeare must be a play by modern standards or be nothing; no account was to be made of it as poetry or as basic character revelation. If it could not be made to yield a play according to modern notions, let it not be given at all. Violences done to the text to bring it up to more youthful standards were not only to be allowed but to be

praised. About these things go as far as you like. Even with liberal changes, could anything really be done with the old fossil? Some authorities held that it could not, and one announced with no circumlocution that he hated Shakespeare anyway. Subsequently he went lecturing to sustain this thesis and argued forcibly to an obtuse world that its admiration of "Hamlet" and "Hamlet's" author was only another mid-Victorian absurdity.

Whether this school of thought founded a cult of public opinion or whether public opinion came first and the critics trailed it, I have no skill to say. It may be that the great wave of cynicism and materialism following the war changed the theatrical standards and tastes of many persons that did not know they were being neatly reformed. A period wherein the pornographic drama went so far that the police had to be called in must contain a considerable element to whom the idyllic beauty of *Imogen* could appear but foolishness. However this may be, it is certain that for the time being at least, a definite and rather curious change had come over the public attitude toward one feature of the Shakespearean legend.

It was after this manner: We have noted before, that, as in other Shakespearean plays, the story of "Cymbeline," strictly as a story, requires of the audience certain allowances. The Elizabethans made these without haggling; for so they were constituted. It is, for instance, with the direct connivance of the audience that *Orlando* does not detect



*Rosalind's* disguise; with the same connivance that *Portia* carries off her transparent pretenses to be *Bellario*; with the same connivance that *Viola* and *Sebastian* are mistaken one for the other. Human identities are not so easily lost and everybody knows they are not. A modern play in which the chief character managed to escape detection by the mere device of changing her clothes would be jeered at. In Shakespeare's day it was like the "robe for to go invisible"—a part of stage paraphernalia and unimportant to the main issue. If we wonder that the Elizabethan imagination was so much the stronger we might remember that it had been developed by more use.

In our time the constant repetition of most of the plays in which these situations occur has produced in the auditor a state of acquiescence. He accepts the impossible without stopping to think about it because he has always been used to it in these plays. But to the great majority of a New York audience in 1923 "*Cymbeline*" was new; a generation had passed since anybody had seen it; the tradition of connivance had been lost. In that one scene we have noted, "*Cymbeline*" goes beyond any of the other plays in the strain it puts upon the complaisance of the audience. To regard this as obscuring the beauty and worth of the rest seems to a Shakespearean all nonsense. Yet beyond question, upon a certain percentage of the audience that gathered in New York in October, 1923, there was such an effect. The cleavage was a straight line. The

Shakespeareans felt that this was an unforgettable triumph of stage art applied to Shakespearean drama; the pictures and the acting alike consistent, well considered, the work of students and authorities. Others said, "How different from 'The Hairy Ape!'" and went home discontented.

The reviews the next morning reflected this difference. Critics like Alan Dale that had not lost their moorings in the storm of garter plays recorded their admiration for the delicate and ethereal charm of Miss Marlowe's *Imogen*, the worth, manliness, and studious accuracy of Mr. Sothern's *Posthumus*. Critics that did not like Shakespeare as Shakespeare took this opportunity to say so with such flourishes of cynical wit as became their avowed skepticism.

Of all of which the upshot was that "Cymbeline" was withdrawn after the first week. Thirty years before Miss Marlowe had played *Imogen* to universal admiration. Those that had seen this portrayal in 1892 and had seen it again 1923 had but one opinion of it. In those thirty years it had lost nothing but only grown in its revealed lights, its beauty and assured command. It was the fashion of the times that had changed.

Not in the camp of the Shakespeareans. What they thought of this *Imogen* is to be had from the comments of Dr. Horace Howard Furness, Jr., the son of the compiler of the first volumes of the great *Variorum* and the continuer of his father's labors. In the *Drama* magazine Dr. Furness had an article deliberately and coolly analyzing this "Cymbeline"

from the point of view of the equipped student. He found that in all ways it was a flawless representation of the original. Whether the original were a well-constructed drama he declined to argue, but there could be no doubt, he said, that Shakespeare's purpose was faithfully executed here.

He should know, if any one.

"And now as regards Julia Marlowe's *Imogen*," he went on, "I think it may truly be said that in her gallery of lovely Shakespearean heroines this is her masterpiece. It is not acting, this: it *is Imogen*." He found it as intensely human as intensely poetic. "Imogen, for all her lovely femininity can on provocation fly into a rage as sharp as *Katherine's*. But with this difference, *Katherine's* rages were all on the surface and without real reason. *Imogen's* are from the very depths of her nature; they are the result of righteous indignation." He thought that in the scene with *Iachimo* "Miss Marlowe rose to heights of tragic intensity to which even she had seldom attained." It is "the rage of a quiet, affectionate nature and is almost uncontrollable, but at the slightest sign of contrition on his part it is past. The purity of her own soul prevents her even suspecting duplicity." And in the scene with *Pisanio* at Milford Haven he thought that Miss Marlowe's acting had rarely been approached by any other actress of recent years.

The rest of the season was devoted to successful repetitions in New York and elsewhere of the former Shakespearean repertoire, with the addition

of a revival of "Romeo and Juliet." This was marked by a feat in acting that astonished all beholders, and is likely to be talked about long after the generation that saw it has vanished. Julia Marlowe had been playing *Juliet* thirty-seven years. The text of the play supposes *Juliet* to be fourteen. Julia Marlowe, after thirty-seven years, created the illusion of youth as convincingly as she had ever created it at any time in her career. Boswell drawing the long bow, say you. Not at all. A cloud of witnesses in many places without dissent establishes it as fact for history as for me. In voice, in mien, in gesture, in appearance, in carriage, in the assumption of the blithesome spirit of innocent youth there went the *Juliet* that had conquered the world long before; only—some said—stronger, more sympathetic, more spiritual. There may be a triumph of the actor's skill greater than this; I am puzzled to think what it can be. I remember seeing Marie Geister in Vienna playing at fifty-five the part of a young man and I remember Bernhardt in "L'Aiglon" and in each of these cases the illusion was strong and good. But for a woman past middle age to play a young man is one thing; for her to play a young girl is another and infinitely more difficult.

Where this phenomenon appeared on that tour the newspapers discussed it as a piece of news. In Philadelphia the *Inquirer* said:

Some persons in the audience must have remembered that impersonation of the daughter of the house of *Capulet* that

won the immediate affection of the public. Miss Marlowe's art has gained in subtlety during the passing years. She never played the part better than she did last evening.

The *Bulletin* noted with great satisfaction the effect of Mr. Sothern's scenic arrangements, which it found to be beautiful, fully adequate and without over-elaboration. "But beyond and above mere beauty of stage investiture," it continued, "is the splendid acting of the stars, both of whom seem to have brought new potency and power to their portrayals." And again: "Miss Marlowe literally has turned the pages back and reads anew, with refreshed vigor and increased eloquence a rôle that she also adorns with the charm and allurements of revived youthfulness. For Miss Marlowe's *Juliet* is in some respects lovelier than ever." It cited, for instance, the early scenes with *Romeo*, which had "ingenuous youthfulness of spirit" and declared that "in the tragic scenes that follow she rises to heights she never has surpassed and that probably no actress of to-day can equal."

Since the thing was really so remarkable, we may take other testimonies. The *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, for one, said:

To the conventional comment that the Sotherns have been too long before the public to make their impersonation of the star-crossed lovers believable, it is only necessary in controversion to point out that they make the hero and heroine of Shakespeare's love canticle human—and lovers. Miss Marlowe is almost incredibly youthful as *Juliet* and



communicates the glow of first love over the footlights with sweeping lyricism. There are tender flutings and grave diapasons in her organ-like voice, with its many stops of passion, of emotion, of youthful urge. Mr. Southern simulates more than adequately the burning passion of the debonair, gallant cavalier of the "Resorgimento."

In his review of the week printed on Sunday, the same critic said that this *Juliet* was "unbelievably youthful. It was a Julia Marlowe amazingly live and spirited, a Julia Marlowe of serene beauty, a Julia Marlowe that knows the technique as few do and still never allows that knowledge to show, a Julia Marlowe whose voice rises as rich and warm and beautiful as ever it did when it was first acclaimed the stage's most glorious voice."

The *North American*, too, came bearing crowns:

The First Lady of the English Speaking Theater acted one of the greatest rôles in the English language at the Shubert last night, when Julia Marlowe restored to our stage a glamour it has sadly lacked during her absence. . . .

It is several years since Miss Marlowe has worn the shimmering robes of *Juliet*, but it is difficult to believe that time has not stood still since her first dazzling appearance in this character. Here still remains the glory of adolescent girlhood. There is no one that gives such rich and gorgeous splendor to the poetry of Shakespeare.

Superbly has nature endowed her with a voice that is deservedly famous in our stage history. The perfect union of genius with art, of personality and of intellect, is everywhere evident in this *Juliet*, from her first blushing entrance to her very last cry of anguish as she falls upon the dead *Romeo*. The thousand and one emotions that pass over her



face, the myriad of delicate shadings that glow in her speech, are but a part of the whole tragic portrait. For here is tragedy in its true estate, and tragedy nobly relived.

Too often we are led astray from a proper valuation of our own more familiar possessions by importations from foreign soils. After witnessing the Marlowe *Juliet*, with all its purity and simplicity, its ardor and its poetry, its sometimes hesitant voicing of youthful, unsatisfied desires, its full flowing flood of poetic ardor, its despairing tears and inevitable crushing tragedy, a veritable human life tangled in the ironic net of circumstances, a bruised rose of fragrance fraught with the precious perfumes of eternal life, we can say that Marlowe is without a peer on the stage of this day and age.

These are only examples of the amazed comment that followed these appearances. "Behold a miracle!" cried one critic, voicing the opinion of all the others, and proceeded to recount how many years had passed since he had seen this *Juliet*, yet how she was able still to create the illusion of youth. "She is actually a girl!" he exclaimed. "*Juliet* as we have always known her, *Juliet*, young and exquisitely radiant in her imperishable youth, *Juliet*, young, passionate, adorable *Juliet*!"

As to the other productions of this year, they, too, fared sumptuously in the public prints. Mr. Sothern's *Hamlet*, *Shylock*, and *Malvolio* were called the greatest impersonations of these parts that had been seen in a lifetime. Many writers took pleasure in remembering with what tireless devotion he had built them. "No impersonation to be seen on



Hotel Majestic  
11 Avenue de l'Opéra  
Paris - France  
New York

Cher "Pichia" Marlowe

Vous êtes dans ma mémoire  
et dans mon cœur.

Vous êtes "Pichia"  
la plus belle  
la plus parfaite  
de "Pichia"

que j'ai rencontrée dans ma  
vie, et pour moi,

vous êtes autre.

"Pichia Marlowe"

Ma loyale Camarade —

bye, cherie amie, tous  
mes bonhais H.

Jusqu'ici, il lui faut  
une vraie amitié, et il  
n'est impossible d'attacher  
à cette lettre.

Croyez à mon regret, et  
pardonnez-moi

Je serai Libre, après  
mon mariage, et alors  
je viendrai vous voir.

À vous de tout cœur.  
Monsieur Duse.  
20 octobre 1893.

Merci  
2 pour les belles fleurs!

TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM  
MME. ELEANORA DUSE.

Hotel Majestic

"Juliet"

Dear Julia Marlowe:

You are in my memory and in my heart. You are  
"Juliet"the most beautiful  
the most perfect  
of the Julietsthat I have met in my life, and for me, you are also "Julia  
Marlowe my loyal comrade." Read, dear friend, all my  
wishes.My days here follow each other in a truly rigid program  
and it is impossible for me to hope for our evening.Believe my regret and *pardon me*.I shall be "free" after my work and then I will come  
to see you.

To you with all my heart,

ELEANORA DUSE.

October 20, 1923.

*Thank you*

for the beautiful flowers!

the American stage in our generation," said the *Toronto Empire*, "has grown more with the passing of time than E. H. Sothern's *Hamlet*. Year by year, he has restudied and enriched his interpretation. It is not so much in the reading of the lines as in the little bits of action illustrating the character of the prince that the actor has made his performance steadily more interesting. Mr. Sothern makes his conception of the character clear and consistent."

In the midst of this great success and these universal tributes, a disaster fell upon the enterprise. While playing in Pittsburgh, Miss Marlowe met with an accident on the stage that compelled her to retire from the cast and, before she had recovered, the season was over. As soon as possible thereafter, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe went to the Engadine for the summer.

The season had been marked with many unusual tributes. Among them came the remarkable letter from Eleanore Duse that is reproduced elsewhere and was written not long before the passing of the great Italian. As a laurel wreath of sincere admiration laid by one true artist before another, it is probably without its fellow in the history of the stage.

And so for once was the oracle approved, prophecy fulfilled, the prophet vindicated.

"Julia Marlowe: remember her name, for you will hear of her again!"

## MISS MARLOWE'S IMPERSONATIONS

Year	Character Assumed	Play
1876	Sir Joseph Porter	Pinafore
1877	Suzette	The Chimes of Nor- mandy
1877	Page	The Little Duke
1882	Heinie	Rip Van Winkle
1884	Maria	Twelfth Night
1884	Stephen	The Hunchback
1884	Balthazar	Romeo and Juliet
1884	Myrene	Pygmalion and Galatea
1887	Parthenia	Ingomar
1887	Pauline	The Lady of Lyons
1888	Juliet	Romeo and Juliet
1888	Galatea	Pygmalion and Galatea
1888	Viola	Twelfth Night
1889	Rosalind	As You Like It
1890	Beatrice	Much Ado About Nothing
1891	Charles Hart	Rogues and Vagabonds
1892	Imogen	Cymbeline
1893	Constance	The Love Chase
1894	Letitia Hardy	The Belle's Stratagem
1894	Chatterton	Chatterton
1894	Lady Teazle	The School for Scandal



1895	Prince Hal	The First Part of King Henry IV
1895	Miss Hardcastle	She Stoops to Conquer
1896	Lydia Languish	The Rivals
1896	Romola	Romola
1897	Mary	For Bonnie Prince Charlie
1898	Countess Valeska	Valeska
1898	Colinette	Colinette
1899	Barbara Frietchie	Barbara Frietchie
1900	Mary Tudor	When Knighthood Was in Flower
1902	Fiametta	Queen Fiametta
1903	Charlotte Oliver	The Cavalier
1903	Lady Barchester	Fools of Nature
1904	Ophelia	Hamlet
1905	Portia	Merchant of Venice
1906	Katherine	The Taming of the Shrew
1906	Jeanne D'Arc	Jeanne D'Arc
1907	Salome	John the Baptist
1907	Rautendenlein	The Sunken Bell
1908	Yvonne	The Goddess of Reason
1908	Cleopatra	Antony and Cleopatra
1909	Gloria	Gloria
1910	Lady Macbeth	Macbeth



## APPENDICES

### (A). GREAT ACTING IN ENGLISH

by ARTHUR SYMONS

(Soon after Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern had left England at the conclusion of their season in 1907, Mr. Symons wrote in an English review a summary of their art and work. Subsequently he reprinted it in a booklet and incorporated it in his well-known volume, "Plays, Acting and Music," published in America by E. P. Dutton & Company of New York and copyrighted. By the permission of E. P. Dutton & Company the article is reproduced here.

Why is it that we have at the present moment no great acting in England? We can remember it in our own time, in Irving, who was a man of individual genius. In him it was the expression of a romantic temperament, really Cornish, that is, Celtic, which had been cultivated like a rare plant, in a hot-house. Irving was an incomparable orchid, a thing beautiful, lonely, and not quite normal. We have one actress now living, an exception to every rule, in whom a rare and wandering genius comes and goes: I mean, of course, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. She enchants us, from time to time, with divine or magical improvisations. We have actresses who have many kinds of charm, actors who have many kinds of useful talent; but have we in our whole island two actors capable of giving so serious, so intelligent, so carefully finished, so vital an interpretation of Shakespeare, or, indeed, of rendering any form of poetic drama on the stage, as the Englishman and Englishwoman who came to us in 1907 from America, in the guise of Americans: Julia Marlowe and Edward Sothern?

The business of the manager, who in most cases is also the chief actor, is to produce a concerted action between his separate

players, as the conductor does between the instruments in his orchestra. If he does not bring them entirely under his influence, if he (because, like the conductor of a pot-house band, he is himself the first fiddle) does not subordinate himself as carefully to the requirements of the composition, the result will be worthless as a whole, no matter what individual talents may glitter out of it. What should we say if the first fiddle insisted on having a cadenza to himself in the course of every dozen bars of the music? What should we say if he cut the best parts of the 'cellos, in order that they might not add a mellowness which would slightly veil the acuteness of his own notes? What should we say if he rearranged the composer's score for the convenience of his own orchestra? What should we say if he left out a beautiful passage on the horn because he had not got one of the two or three perfectly accomplished horn-players in Europe? What should we say if he altered the time of one movement in order to make room for another, in which he would himself be more prominent? What should we say if the conductor of an orchestra committed a single one of these criminal absurdities? The musical public would rise against him as one man, the pedant critics and the young men who smoke as they stand on promenade floors. And yet this, nothing more nor less, is done on the stage of the theater whenever a Shakespeare play, or any serious work of dramatic art, is presented with any sort of public appeal.

In the case of music, fortunately, something more than custom forbids: the nature of music forbids. But the play is at the mercy of the actor-manager, and the actor-manager has no mercy. In England a serious play, above all a poetic play, is not put on by any but small, unsuccessful, more or less private and unprofessional people with any sort of reverence for art, beauty, or, indeed, for the laws and conditions of the drama which is literature as well as drama. Personal vanity and the pecuniary necessity of long runs are enough in themselves to account for the failure of most attempts to combine Shakespeare with show, poetry with the box-office. Or is there in our actor-managers a lack of this very sense of what is required in the proper rendering of imaginative work on the stage?

It is in the staging and acting, the whole performance and management, of such typical plays of Shakespeare as "Hamlet,"

"Romeo and Juliet," and "Twelfth Night," that Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe have shown the whole extent of their powers, and have read us the lesson we most needed. The mission of these two guests has been to show us what we have lost on our stage and what we have forgotten in our Shakespeare. And first of all I would note the extraordinary novelty and life which they give to each play as a whole by their way of setting it in action. I have always felt that a play of Shakespeare, seen on the stage, should give one the same kind of impression as when one is assisting at "a solemn music." The rhythm of Shakespeare's art is not fundamentally different from that of Beethoven, and "Romeo and Juliet" is a suite, "Hamlet" a symphony. To act either of these plays with whatever qualities of another kind, and to fail in producing this musical rhythm from beginning to end, is to fail in the very foundation. Here the music was unflawed; there were no digressions, no eccentricities, no sacrifice to the actor. This astonishing thing occurred: that a play was presented for its own sake, with reverence, not with ostentation; for Shakespeare's sake, not for the actor-manager's.

And from this intelligent, unostentatious way of giving Shakespeare there come to us, naturally, many lessons. Until I saw this performance of "Romeo and Juliet" I thought there was rhetoric in the play, as well as the natural poetry of drama. But I see that it only needs to be acted with genius and intelligence, and the poetry consumes the rhetoric. I never knew before that this play was so near to life, or that every beauty in it could be made so inevitably human. And this is because no one else has rendered, with so deep a truth, with so beautiful a fidelity, all that is passionate and desperate and an ecstatic agony in this tragic love which glorifies and destroys *Juliet*. The decorative *Juliet* of the stage we know, the lovely picture, the *ingénue*, the prattler of pretty phrases; but this mysterious, tragic child, whom love has made wise in making her a woman, is unknown to us outside Shakespeare, and perhaps even there. Mr. Sothern's *Romeo* has an exquisite passion, young and extravagant as a lover's, and is alive. But Miss Marlowe is not only lovely and pathetic as *Juliet*; she is *Juliet*. I would not say that Mr. Sothern's *Hamlet* is the only *Hamlet*, for there are still, no doubt, "points in *Hamlet's* soul unseized by the Germans yet." Yet what a *Hamlet*! How majestic, how simple, how much a poet and a

gentleman! To what depth he suffers! How magnificently he interprets, in the crucifixion of his own soul, the main riddles of the universe! In "Hamlet," too, I saw deeper meanings than I had ever seen in the play when it was acted. Mr. Sothorn was the only quite sane *Hamlet*; his madness is all the outer covering of wisdom; there was nothing fantastic in his grave, subdued, powerful, and piteous representation, in which no symbol, no metaphysical *Faust*, no figment of a German brain, loomed before us, but a man, more to be pitied and not less to be honored than any man in Elsinore. I have seen romantic, tragic, exceptional *Hamlets*, the very bells on the cap of "Fortune's fool." But at last I have seen the man himself, as Shakespeare saw him living, a gentleman as well as a philosopher, a nature of fundamental sincerity; no melancholy clown, but the greatest of all critics of life. And the play, with its melodrama and its lyrical ecstasy, moved before one's eyes like a religious service.

How is it that we get from the acting and management of these two actors a result which no one in England has ever been able to get? Well, in the first place, as I have said, they have the odd caprice of preferring Shakespeare to themselves; the odd conviction that fidelity to Shakespeare will give them the best chance of doing great things themselves. Nothing is accidental, everything obeys a single intention; and what, above all, obeys that intention is the quality of inspiration, which is never absent and never uncontrolled. Intention without the power of achievement is almost as lamentable a thing as achievement not directed by intention. Now here are two players in whom technique has been carried to a supreme point. There is no actor on our stage who can speak either English or verse as these two American actors can. It is on this preliminary technique, this power of using speech as one uses the notes of a musical instrument, that all possibility of great acting depends. Who is there that can give us, not the external gesture, but the inner meaning, of some beautiful and subtle passage in Shakespeare? One of our actors will give it sonorously, as rhetoric, and another eagerly, as passionate speech, but no one with the precise accent of a man who is speaking his thoughts, which is what Shakespeare makes his characters do when he puts his loveliest poetry into their mouths. Look at Mr. Sothorn when he gives the soliloquy "To be or not to be," which we are accustomed to hear spoken to the public in



one or another of many rhetorical manners. Mr. Sothern's *Hamlet* curls himself up in a chair, exactly as sensitive reflective people do when they want to make their bodies comfortable before setting their minds to work; and he lets you overhear his thoughts. Every soliloquy of Shakespeare is meant to be overheard, and just so casually. To render this on the stage requires, first, an understanding of what poetry is; next, a perfect capacity of producing by the sound and intonation of the voice the exact meaning of those words and cadences. Who is there on our stage who has completely mastered those two first requirements of acting? No one now acting in English, except Julia Marlowe and Edward Sothern.

What these two players do is to give us, not the impression which we get when we see and admire fine limitations, but the impression which we get from real people who, when they speak in verse, seem to be speaking merely the language of their own hearts. They give us every character in the round, whereas with our actors we see no more than profiles. Look, for contrast, at the *Malvolio* of Mr. Sothern. It is an elaborate travesty, done in a disguise like the solemn dandy's head of Disraeli. He acts with his eyelids, which move while all the rest of the face is motionless; with his pursed, reticent mouth, with his prim and pompous gestures; with that self-consciousness which brings all *Malvolio's* troubles upon him. It is a fantastic, tragically comic thing, done with rare calculation, and it has its formal, almost cruel share in the immense gaiety of the piece. The play is great and wild, a mockery and a happiness; and it is all seen and not interpreted, but the mystery of it deepened, in the clown's song at the end, which, for once, has been allowed its full effect, not theatrical, but of pure imagination.

So far I have spoken only of those first requirements, those elementary principles of acting, which we ought to be able to take for granted; only, in England, we cannot. These once granted, the individual work of the actor begins, his power to create with the means at his disposal. Let us look, then, a little more closely at Miss Marlowe. I have spoken of her *Juliet*, which is no doubt her finest part. But now look at her *Ophelia*. It is not, perhaps, so great a triumph as her *Juliet*, and merely for the reason that there is little in *Ophelia* but an image of some beautiful bright thing broken. Yet the mad scene will be re-

membered among all other renderings for its edged lightness, the quite simple poetry it makes of madness; above all the natural pity which comes into it from a complete abandonment to what is essence, and not mere decoration, in the spoiled brain of this kind, loving, and will-less woman. She suffers, and is pitifully unaware of it, there before you, the very soul naked and shameless with an innocence beyond innocence. She makes the rage and tenderness of *Hamlet* towards her a creditable thing.

In *Juliet* Miss Marlowe is ripe humanity, in *Ophelia* that same humanity broken down from within. As *Viola*, in "Twelfth Night" she is the woman let loose, to be bewitching in spite of herself; and here again her art is tested, and triumphs, for she is bewitching, and never trespasses into jauntiness on the one hand, or, on the other, into that modern sentiment which the theater has accustomed itself to under the name of romance. She is serious, with a calm and even simplicity, to which everything is a kind of child's play, putting no unnecessary pathos into a matter destined to come right in the end. And so her delicate and restrained gaiety in masquerade interprets perfectly, satisfies every requirement, of what for the moment is whimsical in Shakespeare's art.

Now turn from Shakespeare, and see what can be done with the modern make-believe. Here, in "Jeanne d'Arc," is a recent American melodrama, written ambitiously, in verse which labors to be poetry. The subject was made for Miss Marlowe, but the play was made for effect, and it is lamentable to see her, in scenes made up of false sentiment and theatrical situations, trying to do what she is ready and able to do; what, indeed, some of the scenes give her the chance to be: the little peasant girl, perplexed by visions and possessed by them, and also the peasant saint, too simple to know that she is heroic. Out of a play of shreds and patches one remembers only something which has given it its whole value: the vital image of a divine child, a thing of peace and love, who makes war angelically.

Yet even in this play there was ambition and an aim. Turn, last of all, to a piece which succeeded with London audiences better than Shakespeare, a burlesque of American origin, called "When Knighthood was in Flower." Here, too, I seemed to discern a lesson for the English stage. Even through the silly disguises of this inconceivable production, which pleased innocent

London as it had pleased indifferent New York, one felt a certain lilt and go, a touch of nature among the fool's fabric of the melodrama, which set the actress far above our steady practitioners in the same art of sinking. And, above all, a sense of parody pierced through words and actions, commenting wittily on the nonsense of romance which so many were so willing to take seriously. She was a live thing, defiantly and gaily conscious of every absurdity with which she indulged the babyish tastes of one more public.

An actor or actress who is limited by talent, personality, or preference to a single kind of rôle is not properly an artist at all. It is the curse of success that, in any art, a man who has pleased the public in any single thing is called upon, if he would turn it into money, to repeat it, as exactly as he can, as often as he can. If he does so, he is, again, not an artist. It is the business of every kind of artist to be ceaselessly creative, and, above all, not to repeat himself. When I have seen Miss Marlowe as *Juliet*, as *Ophelia*, and as *Viola*, I am content to have seen her also in a worthless farce, because she showed me that she could go without vulgarity, lightly, safely, through a part that she despised: she did not spoil it out of self-respect; out of a rarer self-respect she carried it through without capitulating to it. Then I hear of her having done *Lady Teazle* and *Imogen*, the *Fiammetta* of Catulle Mendès and the *Salome* of Hauptmann; I do not know even the names of half the parts she has played, but I can imagine her playing them all, not with the same poignancy and success, but with a skill hardly varying from one to another. There is no doubt that she has a natural genius for acting. This genius she has so carefully and so subtly trained that it may strike you at first sight as not being genius at all; because it is so much on a level, because there are no fits and starts in it; because, in short, it has none of the attractiveness of excess. It is by excess that we for the most part distinguish what seems to us genius; and it is often by its excess that genius first really shows itself. But the rarest genius is without excess, and may seem colorless in his perfection, as Giorgione seems beside Titian. But Giorgione will always be the greater.

I quoted to an old friend and fervent admirer of Miss Marlowe the words of Bacon which were always on the lips of Poe and of Baudelaire, about the "strangeness in the proportions" of all

beauty. She asked me, in pained surprise, if I saw anything strange in Miss Marlowe. If I had not, she would have meant nothing for me, as the "faultily faultless" person, the Mrs. Kendal, means nothing to me. The confusion can easily be made, and there will probably always be people who will prefer Mrs. Kendal to Miss Marlowe, as there are those who will think Mme Melba a greater operatic singer than Mme Calvé. What Miss Marlowe has is a great innocence, which is not, like Duse's, the innocence of wisdom, but a childlike and yet wild innocence, such as we might find in a tamed wild beast, in whom there would always be a charm far beyond that of the domestic creature who has grown up on our hearth. This wildness comes to her perhaps from Pan, forces of nature that are always somewhere stealthily about the world, hidden in the blood, unaccountable, unconscious; without which we are tame christened things, fit for cloisters. Duse is the soul made flesh, Réjane the flesh made Parisian, Sarah Bernhardt the flesh and the devil; but Julia Marlowe is the joy of life, the plenitude of sap in the tree.

The personal appeal of Mr. Sothorn and of Miss Marlowe is very different. In his manner of receiving applause there is something almost resentful, as if, being satisfied to do what he chooses to do, and in his own way, he were indifferent to the opinion of others. It is not the actor's attitude; but what a relief from the general subservience of that attitude! In Miss Marlowe there is something young, warm, and engaging, a way of giving herself wholly to the pleasure of pleasing, to which the footlights are scarcely a barrier. As if unconsciously, she fills and gladdens you with a sense of the single human being whom she is representing. And there is her strange beauty, in which the mind and the senses have an equal part, and which is full of savor and grace, alive to the finger-tips. Yet it is not with these personal qualities that I am here chiefly concerned. What I want to emphasize is the particular kind of lesson which this acting, so essentially English, though it comes to us as if set free by America, should have for all who are at all seriously considering the lamentable condition of our stage in the present day. We have nothing like it in England, nothing on the same level, no such honesty and capacity of art, no such worthy results. Are we capable of realizing the difference? If not, Julia Marlowe and Edward Sothorn will have come to England in vain.

## (B). WOMAN'S WORK ON THE STAGE

(This is the paper that Miss Marlowe read before the Woman's Congress of the Chicago World's Fair, Wednesday, May 17, 1893.)

Clearly and fully to show woman's relation to, and influence on, dramatic art it would be necessary to treat comprehensively of the whole history of the drama, which it will be impossible for me to do at this time because of the necessary brevity of this paper.

I do hope to show, however, by a few historical examples and a brief discussion of woman's peculiar adaptability to the needs of the drama, not only her special fitness for dramatic expression and her powerful and beneficial influence, but her right by accomplishments to an exalted position in this art, which she has won—and won by courage, industry and perseverance, ever since in the black ignorance of the past, patient merit suffered through the insolence of office the pains of martyrdom.

The struggle that actors have undergone for recognition and for a respectable established position in society since the modern drama first appeared, for religious purposes, in the tableau and spectacles of the early Christian church, is now a matter of history. But it is not generally known how much more fierce has been the strife in regard to women on the stage, and how much more difficult it has been for them to convince the world at large of the importance of their hard-won position, and their beneficial influence in dramatic art. I am speaking now of the past. Happily at the present stage of dramatic development and for many years back, woman's standard is and has been as high, and her position (and the right to maintain it) as assured and certain as man's.

Unfortunately, however, it was not always so, and looking back to the age of oppression and intolerance, when in 1660 woman first appeared in dramatic representations, we find her entrance



marked an era in dramatic advancement. The first record of woman's appearance upon the stage is December 6, 1660, when Shakespeare's "Othello" was given. *Desdemona* on this occasion was played by a woman, though there seems to be considerable doubt to whom this honor belongs; some have given it to Anne Marshall, though the general supposition is that it was Margaret Hughes. We have Pepys's authority that women appeared in Killigrew's company in London on January 3, 1661, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Beggars' Bush."

It is clearly shown, however, that their earlier appearances were received with great disfavor, for Dr. Doran says that by writers of the time the first actresses were styled unwomanish and graceless, though not meaning them to be ungainly and unfeminine, but that play-acting in itself was below their dignity, and "unbecoming" as he says "woman born in an era of grace." "Glad am I to say," remarked Thomas Brand, speaking of these actresses, "that they were hissed, hooted and pippin-pelted from the stage so that I do not think they will soon be ready to try the same again." He asserts that well-disposed persons were righteously indignant at these women, whom Prynne, a rigorous Puritan of the time, styled "monsters."

Yet, notwithstanding the marked disfavor with which they were first received, reasonable- and serious-minded persons could not fail to see the propriety of *Juliet* and *Desdemona* being acted by a girl rather than a boy. The need for the innovation is well expressed in these lines taken from the prologue written for the introduction of the first actress:

Our women are defective and so sized  
 You'd think that were some of the guard, disguised,  
 For to speak truth, men act (that are between  
 Forty and fifty) wenches of fifteen,  
 With bones so large and nerve so incontinent  
 When you call *Desdemona*, enter *Giant*."

The work that should have properly belonged to women, in being given to men, often caused ridiculous incongruities; and the idea in itself is so truly fantastic that I cannot refrain from citing the apology that was made to Charles the Second when during a prolonged wait at one of the theatrical performances at which this sovereign was present, the delay was explained and



indulgence begged on the plea that "the *Queen* was not shaved." It would appear that immediately upon this important progressive step, the substitution of women for boys in the advancement of dramatic illusion, the importance and artistic need for woman's appearance must have been generally felt, for we read that soon after actresses were in great demand; and it was found that they not only increased the popularity of the theaters in which they performed, but that their coöperation was indispensable to the proper presentation of any play. They made possible a fullness and a beauty of interpretation which had not been dreamed of. Take for a single example the women of Shakespeare. They stand as vivid types of truth and beauty, so alive, indeed, with the living warmth of femininity that their expression by other than woman is in itself a monstrous sacrilege. A play performed by men only can hardly be conceived to-day; and the wonder is that such an absurdity ever existed. The feeling of the need of woman's coöperation with man for dramatic purposes grew rapidly, for men's minds were at this time too highly susceptible to advancement to remain in ignorance of this necessity, and it was not long before actresses were recognized and highly respected. This was so true in the case of Mrs. Betterton, for instance, that when in the year 1674 "*Calista*" was performed at court, this actress was chosen as instructress to Lady Mary and Lady Anne, and much of the subsequent graceful elocution and dignity of bearing of these princesses, which showed itself at court, was accredited to this lady. We read that in company with her distinguished husband she made her home the abiding place of "charity, hospitality and dignity."

What a vast work has been accomplished by women in the drama since then and what a lasting monument of art she has reared for herself in the annals of the stage! To those whose souls are filled with sacred reverence for creative genius, what wealth of delight in looking back upon the dazzling record of the theater when the allurements of Mrs. Betterton, Nell Gwynne, Woffington, Oldfield, Siddons, and more latterly Rachel, Ristori, Fanny Kemble, Ellen Tree, Charlotte Cushman, Helen Faucit, Adelaide Neilson, and a host of others, stand forth as irrefutable proofs of the dignified importance of woman's work in the line of true artistic dramatic advancement!

In evidence of her serious devotion to this art in particular,

and that it has absorbed her very being as no other calling has ever done, and that it has not been a fancy, nor in the higher expression even a gratification of vanity, and has been, and is, a life devotion, an art to which she has given her best intellectual and emotional self, the history of the theater will show.

Courage and perseverance have been woman's battle-cry since the year 1660. What greater instance of courageous perseverance in all history than the sad and grim experience of the great Rachel, who, when a wretched child, traveled in poverty, squalor and cold from place to place in the smaller towns of Europe, and who, at the time, in order to possess a volume of the great Racine, was obliged, though trudging through wet and rain, to pawn her umbrella for the pitiful sum of twenty sous to secure this treasure.

The history of Charlotte Cushman is too well known to make a review of her untiring perseverance necessary, and the heart-rending episodes of her life; when poor, the supporters of others, lacking beauty and charm, she strove to influence managers to give her the opportunity of expressing the genius she felt burned within her. Consider the life of Mrs. Lander, who, besides her valuable services in the dramatic field, in commemoration of the death of her husband (who died from wounds received in battle) took upon herself, with the assistance of her mother, the entire charge of the hospital department of Port Royal, South Carolina. She lives in memory to us, as the blessed name of Florence Nightingale does to the English.

It is unnecessary to go back to the history of the stage for such examples; we have them about us; the struggle of Mme Modjeska and her final and lasting artistic victory are well known to all that have watched with interest and sympathy the lives of artists on the stage.

The executive ability in women of the theater has been quite as remarkable as the courage they have shown. In touching on this point, one at once recalls the experience of Laura Keane, who was a successful manager as well as a delightful comedienne, and particularly one instance when her aptness and nerve were amusingly shown. The play was "Much Ado About Nothing," and at the last moment it was discovered that the costumes were not ready. Calling before her the stolid and gaping supers whose dresses were in a sad state of incompleteness, with a paint brush hurriedly brought from the paint frame, she finished the decora-

tions on their doublets and trunks with black paint, at the same time exclaiming with the rapid delivery peculiar to her: "Now, keep apart, don't sit down; don't brush against the ladies," and immediately was off herself to dress for *Beatrice*.

Innumerable instances may be given of women in the profession who have shown rare administrative ability. The history of the English stage affords many examples of women who have been successful managers, and it is true in this country; Mrs. Conway, for instance, and Mrs. John Drew, who aside from her fine ability as comedienne, for years conducted the Arch Street Theater, Philadelphia, with dignity and success. It is often stated that woman is lacking in most walks of life in the faculty of creative genius, and that indeed in this particular, in comparison with man she is decidedly inferior; this is perhaps a reasonable conclusion in view of her history; but not so, emphatically in regard to dramatic work.

It is by no means a new thought that man is by nature more intellectual and woman by nature more emotional. Of course it is not meant by this that man is never emotional nor woman never intellectual, yet it is surely fair to assume that to man belongs the quality of intellectuality and to woman the emotional quality. Was it not therefore the very possession by nature of this latter quality, which is certainly an absolute necessity in dramatic art, that made her inherently suited for dramatic expression?

Mr. Ruskin, in speaking of the necessary qualities that go to form great artists, says: first, sensibility and tenderness; second, imagination, and third, industry. Woman's nature is peculiarly alive to all of these conditions. It is then no wonder that women on the stage have accomplished great things and will accomplish greater things in future, when such women as Modjeska, Terry, Duse, and the matchless Bernhardt continue through inspiration to show their genius to the world.

Woman's work in literature has with few exceptions been denied any claim to greatness. In music and in other arts she is admitted not to have shown any particular creative power. But her place upon the stage is as absolutely unquestioned as man's. In having thus secured for herself an eminent position in the drama, the actress has advanced the whole cause of woman, since every individual triumph raises the estimation in which the in-

tellectual achievements of a whole class are held. Woman is better understood because she is faithfully portrayed; she is more highly regarded because of her ability to make that portrayal and that faithful portrayal has, I feel, a powerful moral influence in an educational sense. I thoroughly believe it is the duty of mothers to foster in the hearts of their children, while at a tender age, a serious consideration for the better forms of dramatic literature and dramatic representation, avoiding the unhappy tendency of the present age, which is to regard acting merely as a form of amusement, rather than as it should be regarded, an amusement combining a means for intellectual control and artistic suggestion, presented in an attractive and suggestive manner.

That woman is capable of arduous effort and untiring devotion has been fully demonstrated upon the stage. She has helped to elevate the drama to its rightful place among the educational forces of life and to make true what Morley says that, "At the play-house door then we may say to the doubting, enter boldly, for here, too, there are gods."

## (C). POETIC TRIBUTES TO MISS MARLOWE

JULIA MARLOWE

*Ophelia, Imogen, and Juliet,  
Viola, Rosalind, and Portia rare,*  
Each with their charm and beauty in you share  
Through subtle rôles we never can forget,  
Love, passion, mirth, remembrance and regret;  
Jewels of genius which you seem to wear  
As a Queen shows, far-gleaming from her hair  
Diamonds and pearl on golden coronet.

So weaves the spell of this, your chosen art  
A web diverse of many varying moods;  
Tears, laughter, mockery, sadness and disdain.  
An unsolved mystery, sole and set apart  
Something akin to April's interludes,  
That blend at once the sunlight and the rain.

ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

SONNET

On Seeing Julia Marlowe as *Galatea*

What raptured sculptor carved this dazzling face  
From veined marble, smooth and cold and white?  
What Phidias dreaming through the spangled night,  
Gave this to rosy-fingered dawn's embrace  
To shame her beauty and her youthful grace?  
Phidias? 'Twas none! Though all men should unite  
These features they could never limn aright,  
But must disfigure, mutilate, deface.

Pygmalion their author? No, not so!  
 Who gave them birth high-ways divine has trod,  
 For on them is the heavenly, sad sweet glow  
 That speaks of peace unchastened by death's rod.  
 Who then conceived them? He who sees may know  
 Her smile to be the autograph of God.

BARRETT EASTMAN.

Chicago, September 24, 1892.

#### THE MYSTERY

After seeing Julia Marlowe in "Cymbeline"  
 (Rondeau)

The light within—how can a tone,  
 (One lilt, one bird-note) make that known?  
 How is it with us now, that we  
 By only listening seem to see,  
 Clean as a star and all alone,  
 There through most storm most surely seen,  
 Star still when storms are overblown,  
 Strange and yet certain, strong as free,  
 The light within?

What? Is it spell-craft? Something sown,  
 Then labored till its art be grown?  
 Not here. All minds, all hearts agree,  
 Soul-born it is, and all your own,  
 The light within.

WILLIS J. RUTLEDGE.

#### THE PERFECT VOICE

To Julia Marlowe

Her voice is lovely as a fabled lyre,  
 And sweet as winds that sing the sea to sleep,  
 And soft as mermaids sighing fathoms deep,  
 And splendid as the singing of a choir;



Glad and melodious as any bird  
A-thrill in song in a leafy tree-top steep,  
And memorable as things that make us weep,  
And strong as armies when the foe is heard.

Pure music falls and rises in its sound,  
It thrills with changing moods—the Herd-girl's grief,  
*Viola's* mirth, or *Juliet's* despair;  
A deep hush and a silence fall around  
Its golden tone,—as when a rustling leaf  
Sends sound and silence through the startled air.

ZOE AKINS.

JULIA MARLOWE

Though my prose and my rhyme  
Have been sometimes severe,  
There was never a time  
When she ceased to be dear;  
Though far she may range  
And new friends may prefer,  
There will never be change  
In my fealty to her.  
She made Love and Hope blend,  
To enrapture and bless;  
She was comrade and friend;  
She can never be less.  
There is fire in the embers,  
The altar is Truth,  
And the old heart remembers  
The glory of Youth.

WILLIAM WINTER, in *The Century Magazine*.\*

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## TO JULIA MARLOWE

I have seen many a pale *Ophelia*,  
 But never any lily like to this  
 Whom to her death white water lilies kiss;  
 I have seen many a luting *Viola*  
 Waken sad music through Illyria,  
 With such a perfect song of laughing bliss,  
 Made woman, yet a flower at heart, there is  
 Nowhere but in one heavenly Julia.

These in the fragrant garden of the soul  
 Come up like images and ghosts of flowers,  
 The death white lily and the violet,  
 Pure color and suave odor; but the whole  
 Enchantment of the garden is not ours  
 Till the last magic blooms in *Juliet*.

ARTHUR SYMONS, in *Collier's*.\*

## FOR THE ASTONISHMENT OF JULIA MARLOWE

I'll stay out in the blessed air  
 Without one thought, without one care;  
 If one should say to me beware  
     To sit there only,  
 I'll say there's no nightmare to scare  
     Myself here lonely.

If the wind turn from West to North,  
 Should I not stay to sally forth  
 With some one of so great a worth  
     Who comes to catch me,  
 That I shall find so full of mirth  
     Also to match me?

---

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Let all the winds go whirlingig,  
I will not care for them a fig,  
Nor yet attempt to dance a jig  
    With those that are low  
For I shall see without a whig  
    My Julia Marlowe!

ARTHUR SYMONS, in *Collier's*.\*

SEVEN SONNETS TO JULIA MARLOWE

The Art

It is not only sheer similitude,  
Nor recitation of the undying line;  
Not formal show nor accurate design,  
With question of the poet's occult mood.  
The hand upon the enchanted harp is rude,  
Unskilful fingers seeking to define  
Ethereal music in the thought divine,  
When art and mechanism are at feud.  
For true art takes small heed of surface things;  
Far from the plains where streams untroubled roll  
It circles on the summits where the springs  
Burst storm-lashed with the passion of the soul,  
Sustained and poised upon two outstretched wings—  
The Truth, and Intellectual Control.

The Artist

Yet more; this colder reason bravely flies,  
And fails, and falters; still the soul saith naught  
Of subtler feelings; shall we then take thought  
Of all that sways us? Come where *Juliet* lies  
Calm after tempest, or cold Scottish skies  
Fade over *Mary*, where the snare has caught  
A boy's soul singing, or with laughter fraught  
Through Arden trips the trim maid in disguise—

---

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Ah, not with calmly reasoned why or how  
 We shall make count of ways elusive, whence  
 The mind, it may be in its own despite,  
 Finds dreamed-of cloudland all made living! Now  
 Remains clear vision seen with surer sense,  
 Whereof a part is loveliness, part light.

*Juliet*

It was not summer's ripening breath that blew  
 With perfumed eddies round and round the close  
 To charm from out the bud the perfect rose  
 Of love that midst the dead leaves sweetly grew,  
 But as its half-oped folds were touched with dew  
 The blinded Gardener Fate, that never knows  
 If weed or lily in his garden grows,  
 Across the silken sheath his sickle drew.

It died and dies not; ere the years had shed  
 Their sad forgetfulness above its head  
 The soul of deathless life was breathed from him  
 Whose word lives ever; as for us again  
 In you this flower blossoms love and pain  
 Beheld through eyes that tears have made all dim.

*Beatrice*

She will not love, not she—nay, Love, depart—  
 She is love-proof and panoplied in mirth  
 By that same star that danced above her birth;  
 So says she. At the word Love's puny dart  
 A way finds through wit's armor to her heart.  
 She bravely jests of poor men made of earth  
 The while the love she says is nothing worth  
 Becomes her master. So transcends your art.

"We'll not be moved," we say. "Why should we care  
 For these old tales of triumph or distress,  
 And woes of folk that long have passed away?"  
 And then—a word—the smile—the rippling hair,  
 Or but the far-off rustle of your dress,  
 And the old thralldom reasserts its sway.

*Viola*

"Poor lady, she were better love a dream!"

*Olivia's* fate we fathom by our own;

Yet waver whether dreams that thus are shown  
Or cold sunlight be clearer; elusive seem

The gliding figures and the face, the gleam

Of tears or laughter in her eyes, the tone

So soft she speaks in sometimes, when unknown  
She loves by stealth, or has her joy supreme.

Yea, like a dream may all be when we muse

Hereafter—all but of the tender maid

This portrait. Like the faces of our youth,  
That with shut eyes we see and cannot lose,

It lingers—Time nor Change may never fade

Its perfect beauty which is perfect truth.

*Rosalind*

From out the pages of the Master's book—

Doublet and hose new russet like the morn,

A spear within her slim white fingers borne—

Glides now the very Rosalind that took

Captive his fancy; so in forest nook

He dreamed her, going past the flowered thorn,

All woman heart, all love in spite of scorn

For love, soothly pretended; as we look

A world of toil and tangled trouble fades;

As if to some Elizabethan seer

Dim Elfland comes again: and straying, we  
Forgetful in its fairy lights and shades,

A sound as of a harp long silent hear;

A face as of a long-sought singer see.

*Chatterton*

He went his way to rest with weary feet,

Home turning as one would that long had strayed

In stoniest pathways, for his love repaid

With mocking laughter, for his singing sweet

With fast-shut door and wind-swept echoing street.  
 Tired eyes and hopeless heart to the great shade  
 Crept beaten back at last but unafraid,  
 And stilled were wings for a sodden world too fleet.

He went his way; and we, in whose charmed ears  
 Live still the sound and throbbing of his song,  
 But for this picture of his darkening years  
 Might nothing know how bruised and baffled long  
 His soul soared singing to the brightest spheres  
 From that salt gulf of bitterness and wrong.

(Reprinted from "Such Stuff as Dreams.")

#### MARY OF THE HIGHLANDS

To Julia Marlowe in "For Bonnie Prince Charlie."

A drift of lights—but one that chiefly led,  
 It was so clear of flame, so purely brought.  
 Murky the others, fitful, mean, or naught,  
 But this, still burning. Storms beat on the head  
 That bore it, fair and young; the more it shed  
 For blast and shock its guidance, more upcaught  
 All lesser souls to where her dreams had wrought  
 A place to see the sunrise growing red.

There comes no sunrise, only old despair  
 And midnight deepening. Slowly upward slips  
 The light—hovers a moment—and is flown.  
 The world is narrowed to that mount-side, where  
 The cry upon the stricken grandsire's lips  
 Echoes in all our hearts—"Alone! Alone!"

C. E. R.

#### TO JULIA MARLOWE

There is a place where perfect things do dwell  
 And always lovely in their golden prime;  
 With youth that knows not parting nor farewell,  
 They stand untouched above the surge of time.



Here all the treasures of the world remain,  
All beauty that the years may not destroy,  
Guarded forever in this sacred fane—  
Giving forever of their wealth of joy.

Can you then dream that you may now depart,  
You who have been a poet's dream come true,  
You who have quickened with your matchless art  
His wondrous women that we know as you!

Rather you well may say through life's long range:  
"No. Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change."  
THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

TO JULIA MARLOWE SOTHERN

Oh! Radiant One, eternal youth is thine.  
No, not alone in face and form, but more;  
Within thee there is spirit quite divine,  
(With youthful mien retained, I know a score.)  
To thee alone is given a blessed state;  
A beauty that is far more dear than life;  
A something calm that seems to smile at fate,  
And rise above the sordid petty strife  
Of little things that harrow us while here,  
And cause the weary lines of pain to show;  
To make the countenance both sad and dread,  
As if contentment we could never know.  
But in thee that sweet spirit ever lives,  
Which to God's best beloved He sometimes gives.

FREDERICK LEWIS.

TO NEIGHBOR CONSTANCE

How we love thy sweetly gracious art  
That makes us love ourselves and feel  
That just beyond the foot-lights all is real!  
We laugh with thee, or thy distresses start  
The truant tears. Are these moods but a part  
Of thy sweet self, or is it art ideal?

It matters not—we are content to steal  
 Rapturous moments from life's busy mart,  
 And dream with thee, old, half-forgotten dreams.  
 What reck's it, say we, that you do but play  
 At things unreal; we'll catch thy fancy's bent  
 And take as true what all so truthful seems;  
 We'll follow thee, choose thou for us the way—  
 Art or reality—we are content.

WILLIAM HEREFORD.

#### THE STAR

To Julia Marlowe Sothern, Who has Borne the Light of a Star

In the blue shadow of the ancient hills  
 Tired flocks are sleeping while a soft wind blows  
 From foam fringed seas murmuring ancient woes  
 And all the dreaming dusk with memory fills;  
 Then suddenly one lonely cloud distills  
 Ethereal incense and dissolving snows.  
 A moth-pale Star, an unsheathed silver rose  
 And dew-dimmed night with its mild wonder thrills.

The trembling horsemen leave their grassy bed  
 And follow the pure Flame across the field  
 To find Incarnate Love—a Child asleep.  
 So through the centuries the earth is led  
 By the white radiance of the Truth revealed  
 To humble shepherds and to simple sheep.

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

#### TO JULIA MARLOWE

Sonnet, with Cipher

To thee, whose genius gladdens earthly days,  
 To thee, whose beauty blesses art with light—  
 As justice sweetens human strength with right—  
 Is tuned the harp that humbly sings thy praise.

The glory of thy life in mem'ry stays  
 Till mirth itself is happier in thy sight:  
 Thy art and skill make poesy more bright  
 And charm the tones till joyous songs obeys.  
 Thy gifts are boons to chasten comedy,  
 To guide more sacredly the poet's aim,  
 And life and love and truth in concord bind.  
 May toil and hope prove constant melody;  
 May life be crowned with all perfection's fame  
 A poem exquisite, as thine own *Rosalind*.

(Add the first letter of the first line to the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, and so on.)

EDWARD FREIBERGER.

TO JULIA MARLOWE

ESTO PERPETUA

If you would honor some small verse from me  
 Let it be this:  
 Now Time is in your debt;  
 They you have charmed can ne'er the charm forget  
 And still are young, as young as memory,  
 Sharing with you your immortality,  
 Guarded from age as by some amulet  
 Of love as fragrant as a violet  
 That never fades but blooms eternally.

The Masters' gift to you: Their chosen part,  
 But you it was who made it live and flow'r;  
 And this your gift to men: you held the heart  
 Until it warmed the soul; and this your pow'r:  
 Men, dreaming 'neath the magic of your art,  
 Held Love and Youth for one undying hour.

WILLIAM HEREFORD.



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